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JOB STRESS AND EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOUR: THE MODERATING ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG STAFF OF COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ANNIE GYASI-MIDLEY

2024

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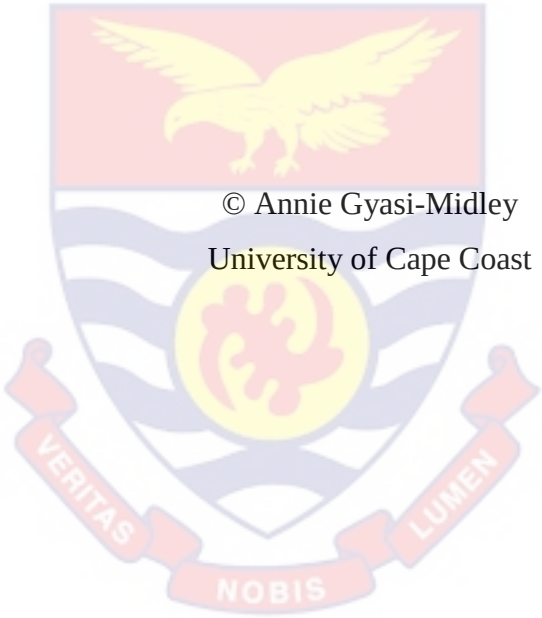

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BY

ANNIE GYASI-MIDLEY

Thesis submitted to the Department of Human Resource Management of the School of Business, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Commerce Degree in Human Resource Management

NOVEMBER 2024

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature…… Date…….

Name: Anne Gyasi-Midley

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature…… Date……

Name: Prof. (Mrs) Elizabeth Cornelia Annan-Prah

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour: the moderating role of social support amongst the staff of the College of Distance Education (CoDE) at the University of Cape Coast. Utilizing a comprehensive survey, the research examines how different types of social support: emotional, informational, and instrumental moderate the effects of job stress on proactive and counterproductive workplace behaviours. The study adopted a positivist philosophy, and the quantitative data was gathered using a sample of 150 employees out of the total population of 240 employees. The partial least square structural equation modelling technique was used to analyse the main objectives of this study using SMART PLSEM. The findings reveal a weak, non-significant negative relationship between job stress and employee behaviour, suggesting that job stress alone does not directly influence employee actions but other factors like workloads, work pressures and role ambiguity. However, a strong positive correlation was found between social support and employee behaviour, indicating that high levels of social support led to improved performance, job satisfaction, and reduced counterproductive behaviours. Emotional and informational support significantly buffer the negative impacts of job stress, promoting positive employee behaviour, while instrumental support showed a relatively insignificant effect. The study's implications emphasize the need for the College of Distance Education to integrate holistic support strategies to effectively manage employee stress and enhance overall workplace behaviour.

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KEYWORDS

Counter-productive behaviours

Employee proactive behaviour

Social support

Instrumental support

Informational support

Emotional support

Workplace stress

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Lastly, I am profoundly grateful to my parents for their constant encouragement and for providing me with the opportunity to pursue my education. Their love and support have been a constant source of strength.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved parents, stepfather, Mr. Evans Douglas Salvo and my family

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

JBS	Job Stress
SOS	Social Support
ES	Emotional Support
IS	Instrumental Support
INS	Informational Support
EMB	Employee Behaviour
CoDE	College of Distance Education
UCC	University of Cape Coast
JD-R	Job Demand Resource Model

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In this modern working environment, many workers experience job stress which turns to influence their behaviours and approach towards work. An employee's behaviour and work attitude play a vital role in helping the organisation achieve its stated goals and objectives. The purpose of the study is to access the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour at University of Cape Coast, College of Distance Education (CoDE), as well as the effect of workplace social support in influencing employee behaviour. This chapter provides a summary of the study, addressing the study's background, problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives, significance of the study, limitations and the organization of the study.

Background to the Study

Individual lives are characterized by stress which either influences productivity in a positive or negative way (Temerak et al., 2023). Job Stress occurs when a worker's interactions with things connected to their jobs alter, aggravate or otherwise affect the physical or psychological state to the point where they are compelled to deviate from their regular function (Shenje & Wushe, 2019). For instance, in the educational institutions, job stress is a wide spread problem faced by most workers. Paquette (2023) conducted a study and found out that 83 % of teacher's experience job-related stress and 58 % reported that their job is highly stressful.

Young (2022) confirmed that the incidence of job stress is even higher among primary and secondary school teachers. Fink (2018) also uncovered

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that job stress is by far the most significant form of stress that employees experience at the workplace. Apart from burnout, work conflict and stigmatisation, job stress is one of the key problems faced by most educational institutions since it has a physical and psychological cause and effect on the employee (Ariza et al., 2018). Similarly, Toropova and Johansson (2021) submits that employees who face stress at school are mostly caused by lack of resources, difficult students or parents, tight schedules and deadlines, tough workloads, inability to meet personal needs, inadequate support from management and co-workers, organisational change and restrictions.

Other factors such as work-life balance and job insecurities also contribute to job stress among educational institutions. According to Foy et al. (2019), factors that cause job stress can also create a stressful work environment, which can negatively affect an employee's behaviour. This situation can lead to distress, thus the negative aspect of stress that extends beyond the employee. Inversely, eustress is the positive and healthy aspect of stress that improves the psychological well-being of an employee (Foy et al., 2019). The existence of eustress can aid workers in maintaining their focus, attention, stimulation, and enthusiasm (Sesen & Ertan, 2022).

Job stress is mostly caused by demands of workload or an employee's urge to fulfill his or her basic needs at the workplace. These needs are viewed as the necessities or criteria that a person must meet in order to survive and succeed within the organization. Dawn (2015) opines that human necessities cover both physical and intangible components, and, more significantly, they cover the things that people are naturally motivated to acquire. The theory of Abraham Maslow provides an analytical framework centred on unmet needs.

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According to the theory, needs are insatiable, and unmet needs can lead to frustration or job stress at the workplace.

In a positive or negative way Maslow's hierarchy of needs identified five essential needs that an individual must meet: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Physiological needs include basic necessities such as food, water, shelter, and are critical for survival. Safety needs include physical and emotional security, such as job security and a safe work environment. Love or belonging needs involve social connections and relationships, such as friendships with colleagues.

Esteem needs include the desire for recognition, respect, and status within the workplace. Finally, self-actualization needs involve the desire to reach one's full potential and fulfil personal goals.

Understanding the concept helps employees to know their needs and how they can meet their needs Vuong (2022). Research has shown that organisations can use Maslow's theory to design work environments that support employee needs and improves employee behaviour and productivity. For example, providing employees with emotional, instrumental and informational support to help them manage stress effectively and efficiently (Shen, 2019). Emotional support is the support from colleagues and supervisors which enables employees to manage their emotions and cope with stressors they face at the workplace (French et al., 2018).

Instrumental support from management is providing employees with the practical assistance they need to manage their workload and navigate challenging solutions and lastly, informational support, thus providing relevant information or guidance to assist the employees in avoiding stress (Kelly et al.,

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2017). In Italy, Fiorilli and Gabola (2018) believes that creating social support amongst colleagues and supervisors within the workplace can help employees feel more connected and supported. This can foster a sense of belonging and reduce the negative impact on employee positive behaviour.

Social support at the workplace represents a variety of interpersonal behaviour that can boost an individual's psychological and behavioural functioning, thus feeling cared for, valued, and having access to direct and indirect help (Yousaf et al., 2020). As such, social support can be considered as a valuable tool for preventing job related stress. In Uk, Holland and Collins (2018) agree that support motivates an employee in fulfilling his or her needs. The concept of workplace social support is derived from the model Job Demand Control Support (JDCS). The well-known model designed by Karasek and Theorell in 1990 describes how job characteristics influences employees' psychological wellbeing (Ariza-Montes et al., 2018).

The model shows how job demands, such as work overload, unclear role, and pressure related to the job, can lead to stress in employees. however, people can learn stress coping mechanisms that will give them more autonomy and control over their work. (Baka, L., 2020). This model is relevant to the study because it emphasizes the importance of understanding that job demand causes job stress and employees can reduce this stress by gaining greater job control and developing stronger relationships with colleagues and supervisors (Vuong et al., 2023). In Ghana, Nordzo (2017) investigated how job-related stress can affect employee performance at selected banks in Ghana, the results revealed that there was a high level of job stress amongst bankers because

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stress management is low which leads to a negative effect on employees' productivity.

Another investigation on the effects of work-related stress on employee performance was carried out in Cape Coast by Asamoah-Appiah and Aggrey-Fynn (2017). The study at Twifo Oil Palm Plantation Ltd. discovered that employees experience higher levels of physical and mental stress as a result of their working circumstances and career advancement. Job stress is important to educational institutions since it plays a major role in influencing an employees' psychological well-being, and as a result, management should put policies in place to build a friendly work environment that promotes healthy employee behaviour (Fink (2018).

The College of Distance Education (CoDE), officially known as the Centre for Continuing Education, was established in 1997. The purpose of CoDE was to try and bring education closer to the doorstep of learners by setting up centres at the various regions to instil and facilitate quality learning. CoDE is one of the colleges in the University of Cape Coast whose work is extremely tough due to the large number of students they work with. Due to the enormous number of students, they work with, it becomes a bit challenging for employees to cope with the, demands of these students which creates a stressful work environment for employees (John et al., 2020).

Although earlier researchers (Fiorilli & Gabola 2018; Aggrey-Fynn, 2017; Holland and Collins, 2018) identified job stress as a factor that affects employee behaviour and suggested some social support strategies that will help reduce stress among staff in other Organizations, such studies are rare in the Universities in Ghana, especially the University of Cape Coast, College of

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Distance Education. Additionally, studies on the aforementioned constructs were usually conducted in countries like Asia, Europe, and America. This is because, the advanced economies are well equipped in terms of infrastructure, technology, research and development, and level of education. Also, the are inconsistencies in the findings of the research concerning stress, employee behaviour and social support. This therefore suggest further studies to assess the impact of job stress on employee behaviour and the moderating role of social support in promoting employee behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

Distance education is the type of learning where students are physically separated from lecturers. For instance, by living in different localities (Pregowska et al.,2021). The University of Cape Coast (UCC) through its distance program gave a new meaning to education by giving to those who were determined to achieve their dreams a second chance. College of Distance Education (CoDE) UCC, has admitted and gained a lot of students over these past years and due to the enormous number of students they work with, employees tend to work all week and weekends just to satisfy the needs of students without getting weekly rest, which normally affect their behaviour at the workplace (John et al., 2020).

Employees are also required to supervise twelve weeks of face-to-face teachings, four weeks of continuous assessment invigilation (first and second quizzes), and four weeks of end-of-semester examinations during the weekends. They are also compelled to work from Mondays to Thursdays in the office as well as on Fridays in various study centres across the country. (Segbenya et al., 2018). In order to travel on Fridays to the various study

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centres, the staff must also prepare the appropriate paperwork and supplies for the section that will take place over the weekend within four working days and when under pressure, they may need to work throughout the night to finish all the materials and documentation in time for the weekend's activity.

In addition, some female staff members, particularly nursing mothers and pregnant women, are required to send their children to the study centres on weekends, which make life uncomfortable for them there. These conditions have elevated the workload of staff which calls for more time, attention, and energy. In response to these difficulties, earlier research has looked at different facets of the issue. For instance, Segbenya et al. (2018) looked into the impact of work-life balance on employees' job satisfaction at CoDE and discovered a significant level of friction between staff members' work and non-work schedules.

Another study conducted by Akuamoah-Boateng (2020) on how female employees of the College of Distance Education reconcile their non-work roles, with their busy working schedules. The study revealed that female employees struggle to combine their work and personal lives because of situational duties and demanding work schedules. Although several other investigations have been carried out by these authors (Chen, K., 2022; Junaedi, M., & Wulani, F. 2021; Leiter et al., 2011) concerning the issues affecting the college employees, it appears that little or no study has been conducted on job stress, social support and employee behaviour amongst staff of the College of Distance Education, UCC to be precise. It is in this regard that this current study seeks to examine the effect of job stress on employee

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behaviour and moderating role of social support in promoting employee behaviour at CoDE

Purpose of the study

The primary goal of the research is to analyse the effect of job stress on employee behaviour by assessing the role of workplace social support in employee behaviour at the institution of distance education (UCC).

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour at the college of distance education.
2. Assess the relationship between social support and employee behaviour.
3. To investigate the impact of social support on employee stress levels at the college of distance education.
4. Examine the moderating role of social support on job stress and employee behaviour at the college of distance education.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives on the study, these research questions were formulated to achieve the overall goal of this research

1. How does job stress influence employee behaviour such as proactive and counterproductive behaviours.
2. How does social support influence the way employee behave at the workplace?
3. How does social support moderate the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour at College of Distance Education?

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4. What are the implications of the findings in terms of promoting employee wellbeing and performance?

Significance of the Study

This study is an important academic endeavour because it will ultimately help employers and employees alike by enabling them to recognize the importance of fostering a healthy decentralized work environment, which will contribute positively to staff behaviour at work and advance organizational productivity. Employees would benefit from being forced to take up certain vigorous roles and responsibilities detrimental to their well-being. It will also aid them explore and identify the stressors in their own work environment, and take actions to alleviate them with assistance from their management and co-workers. The study also aims to raise awareness among the college of distance education (Ucc) staff about the significance of offering workplace social support to employees who are currently dealing with job related stress.

Delimitations of the Study

Interviewing every employee in the university on the job stress, workplace social support and employee behaviour would have been ideal. But due to time constraint, the study will be limited to only the employees at the college of distance educations (University of Cape Coast). This means that employees from the Colleges of Humanities and Legal Studies, Education Studies, Health and Allied Science, and other colleges will be excluded from the study, since the study is only focusing on the employees at College of Distance Education. The study specifically focuses on the effects of stress on employee-on-employee behaviour and how social support can help reduce the

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negative effect on employees' behaviour at College of Distance Education (UCC)

Limitation of the Study

This study has received less attention world-wide, especially in academia. As a result, it will be challenging to support the study's conclusions with adequately related literature. However, the constraint can be minimized by adding related findings from other sources. Also, time will be a major constraint due to some respondent's inability and unwillingness to answer questionnaires and express their true feelings. Again, the number of respondents will be skewed since the study is based on only the employees at the college of distance (UCC) and not all the employees at the University of Cape Coast. Finally, collecting relevant data for analysis can be affected by some respondent's lack of concern or failure to disclose all relevant information

Definition of Terms

Job stress is a state of tension that influences a person's feelings, thoughts, and conditions. A person's capacity to manage their environment may be threatened by excessive stress.

Social support is explained as workplace relationships with co-workers and Supervisors who are useful in resolving work-related issues at work.

Employee behaviour is defined as a person's reaction to a particular scenario at work. Employees must perform appropriately at work in order to maintain a positive work environment and earn the respect and admiration of their co-workers.

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Organisation of the Study

The study is categorised into five chapters, with the first chapter comprising the summary of synopsis, problem statement, research objectives and questions, limitations, purpose of study, delimitations, and the organization of study. The second chapter comprise of the literature review, categorised into empirical, conceptual and theoretical review. The third chapter talks about the research methodology used which comprise of research design, population (area of study), sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection techniques, ethical issues and data analysis. The fourth chapter will comprise of the overview of study, data analysis, major findings and conclusions of the study. The fifth chapter ends the study by giving recommendations for further research.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore existing theories, empirical studies and models that explain the role of job stress and its impact on employee behaviour. Additionally, the review will examine the role of social support as a potential resource that may moderate or buffer the effects of stress on employee behaviour. Furthermore, gaps related to the research will be identified.

Theoretical Review

A theory plays a vital role in social sciences. It defines what an event is and describes how it works (Reio & Shuck, 2015; Torraco, 2005), thereby offering the platform for experts to apply it to real-world situations. The theory explains the most important parameters and how they are examined. (Van, 2009). A theory is practical because it advances knowledge, directs research, and informs the field in which it is used. As a result, research is built on a carefully selected theory (Pitt-Catsouphes et al., 2006). Two theories underpinned the study. The main theoretical foundation underpinning this study is Abraham Maslow's theory of needs, whiles Job demand and resource model is supplementary.

Abraham Maslow theory of need

Maslow's hierarchy of need is a psychological theory posited by Abraham Maslow, on what motivates human behaviour and what gives people a sense of fulfilment (Neher, A. 1991). The theory was developed to identify how human needs can be fulfilled using a hierarchy. According to Maslow, individuals have five basic categories of needs that they strive to fulfil:

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physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 2010). Physiological needs include basic necessities of life such as food, water, warmth, sleep and shelter, and are critical for survival. Safety needs include physical and emotional security, thus the things that human needs to feel safe, such as having a stable and sufficient income, feeling protected from crime and abuse, job security and a safe work environment (Sarda, Mukund, et al., 2018).

Also, Love and belonging needs include a sense of connection with people, belonging to a group, and having stable relationships. It involves social connections and relationships, such as friendships with colleagues (Shen, 2019). Esteem needs are those healthy positive regards and admiration for oneself and it includes the desire for recognition, respect, and status within the workplace. Finally, self-actualization needs which is a person's ability to understand his/her potentials and achieving them. It involves the desire to reach one's full potential and fulfil personal goals (Shen, 2019).

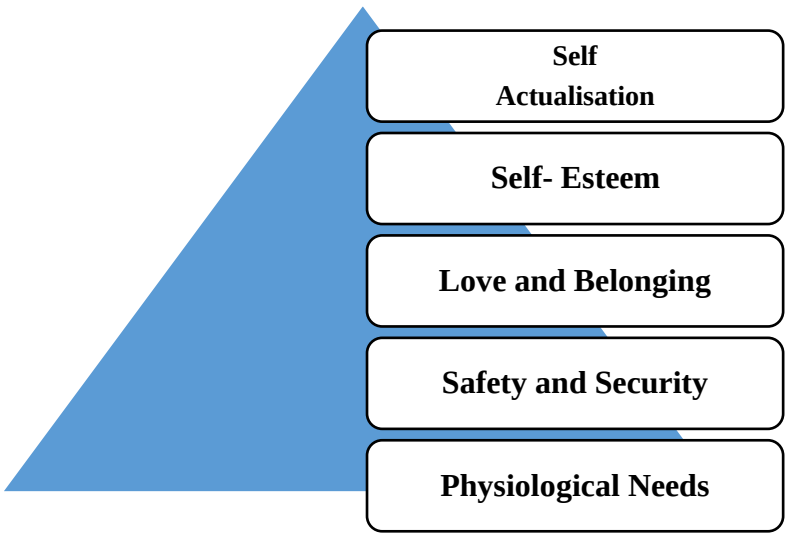

Figure 1: Abraham Maslow's Pyramid of Needs

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Maslow represented these needs onto a pyramid, with each need occupying a separate level. The lowest and highest categories indicate the most fundamental and highest-priority survival needs (Noltemeyer et al.,2021). The pyramid represents Maslow's belief that human needs are hierarchical, with some taking precedence over others. According to his idea, humans cannot meet the greater wants at the summit of the pyramid unless they first satisfied the lower ones. Maslow maintained that only by fulfilling all five needs can mankind truly thrive (Tripathi, N.,2018). According to Cherry (2021), Maslow's hierarchy of needs has been widely applied to understand employee behaviour in organizations (Cherry, 2021).

In the complex tapestry of human motivation and well-being, Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs stands as a seminal framework, illuminating the layers of human desires that propel us towards self-actualization. From fundamental physiological requirements to the pinnacle of self-fulfilment, Maslow's hierarchy provides a blueprint for understanding the multifaceted nature of our aspirations (Tripathi, N.,2018). However, within this journey towards personal growth, the significance of social support (emotional, instrumental, and informational) becomes a linchpin that bolsters the realisation of these needs. Maslow's hierarchy seamlessly incorporates emotional support, which is similar to the warmth of a maternal embrace.

The need for love and belongingness, which manifests as a person's desire for genuine connections with others and acceptance in their social circles, rests at the pyramid's base (Hotchkiss & Lesher, 2018). When employees receive emotional support such as empathy, understanding and encouragement, it helps fulfill their need for love and connection. Feeling

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emotionally supported can foster a sense of belonging and strengthen relationships, which are essential to fulfilling the love and social needs in the hierarchy. Additionally, emotional support can also contribute to fulfilling the self-esteem needs. By receiving validations, recognition and positive feedback, employees can develop a sense of self-worth and confidence, which are crucial for fulfilling the self-esteem needs (Yousaf et al., 2020).

The scaffolding of instrumental support intimately intertwines with Maslow's framework, reiterating the idea that a solid foundation is required for growing ambitions. The practical arm of aid, instrumental support, directly addresses safety security needs, acting as a bulwark against life's uncertainties (Viera et al., 2021). Instrumental support can be linked to safety needs by providing practical assistance and resources that helps employees feel protected and secured. When workers receive instrumental support, such as help with task or access to necessary resource, it can alleviate stress and create a sense of stability. For instance, Hotchkiss (2018) opines that: employees who receive financial assistance or safe accommodation can address their immediate safety and security concerns.

Informational support is particularly relevant at the self-actualization level. When individuals seek personal growth, creativity, and the realization of their full potential, they often benefit from receiving guidance, knowledge and useful information needed to pursue their passions, explore their potential, and achieve growth. Hansen, I.G. (2020) When employees receive informational support, such as guidance, mentorship, or access to educational opportunities, it can empower them to discover and develop their unique talents and abilities. By acquiring and new skills and expanding their knowledge, individuals can

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strive towards self-fulfillment and reach their highest potential which is a key aspect of self-actualization (Shuang et al., 2023).

Job Demand Resource Model

The Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) Model is a well-known model that seeks to explain the interplay between job demands and job resources and their impact on employee well-being, motivation, and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This model, developed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001), provides insights into how work-related factors influence employees' experiences in the workplace. The JD-R Model distinguishes two types of factors: job demands and job resources. Job demands refer to the parts of a job that require prolonged physical or psychological effort and have possible physiological and psychological implications (Demerouti et al., 2001). These can include high workloads, time pressure, role ambiguity, and emotional demands.

Job resources, on the other hand, consist of the physical, psychological, social, or organizational characteristics of a job that facilitate attaining work goals, reduce job demands, and drive personal growth (Demerouti et al., 2001). Examples of job resources include autonomy, social support from colleagues and supervisors, and opportunity for skill development, and feedback. The JD-R Model has gained widespread attention due to its practical implications for both organisations and employees. It suggests that by optimising job resources and managing job demands, organisations can create a positive work atmosphere that encourages employee well-being and performance.

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Additionally, the model highlights the role of social support as a critical resource to minimize the negative effects of job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). However, the model also has its limitations. It primarily focuses on individual-level processes and might not fully capture the complexity of organisational and contextual factors that influence job demands and resources. Cultural differences and industry-specific variations could impact the model's applicability in different settings (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Despite these limitations, the JD-R Model is nevertheless a useful framework for understanding the relationship between job demands, resources, and employee well-being.

The Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) Model, proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001), serves as a comprehensive framework for understanding the interaction between job demands and job resources in the workplace and their impact on employee well-being and performance. This model posits that every work environment is characterized by specific demands and resources that individuals navigate. Job demands encompass aspects such as workload, time pressure, and emotional demands, which can potentially lead to job stress. On the other hand, job resources include factors like autonomy, social support, and opportunities. for growth, which contribute to motivation and overall well-being.

The relationship between the JD-R Model, Job Stress, and social support is of particular significance in understanding the dynamics of the work environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The Model argues that high job demand without sufficient resources to cope with those demands can lead to burnout and other negative outcomes. Social support, as a crucial job resource,

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plays a pivotal role in mitigating the impact of job demands and stress. Social support can be classified into various forms, such as emotional, instrumental, and informational support, and it involves interactions with colleagues, supervisors, and friends both within and outside the workplace. When employees perceive adequate social support, it can act as a buffer against the negative effects of high job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Coworkers and supervisors who provide support and encouragement can help employees cope with stressors, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and well-being.

Comparatively, when employees of college of distance education (CoDE) are provided with instrumental resources and materials like transportation, accommodation and learning materials for students, it helps easy their workload and increase productivity. Additionally, when employees of CoDE are well oriented and given the required information about their weekend activities, they are able to meet the demands and complaints of students which keep their stress level at a minimum. Colleagues or supervisors who offer information and guidance can help employees feel more in control of their work situation, reducing stress. Also, employees who give emotional support to their colleagues like expressing empathy, care and understanding helps to build morale. When employees face high job demands, having colleagues or supervisors who offer emotional support can help alleviate stress by providing a sense of belonging and reassurance. Emotional support can contribute to employees' overall well-being and resilience.

Implications and limitations of the Job Demand Resource Model

The Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) Model has several practical implications for organisations and researchers alike. One of the key

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implications is its ability to guide interventions aimed at improving employee well-being and organisational outcomes. By identifying specific job demands and resources, organisations can target their efforts to reduce excessive demands and enhance available resources, thereby promoting employee engagement and job satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). For instance, interventions that provide employees with more control over their work (autonomy) or opportunities for skill development can positively impact their motivation and performance.

Additionally, the JD-R Model underscores the importance of social support as a crucial resource in the workplace. Organisations can foster a supportive culture by encouraging positive relationships among colleagues, offering mentoring programmes, and promoting effective communication between supervisors and employees. These efforts can enhance the overall work environment and help employees cope with job demands more effectively (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). While the JD-R model provides useful insights, it is vital to acknowledge its limitations. One limitation lies in its focus on individual-level processes, which might overlook broader systemic factors that influence job demands and resources.

Organisational structures, leadership styles, and external economic factors can significantly impact the work environment but are not extensively addressed within the model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Furthermore, The JD-R Model primarily emphasises the additive nature of Job demands and resources, assuming that more resources necessarily offset higher demands. However, the interactions between demands and resources can be more complex, with certain resources being more effective in mitigating specific

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demands (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Additionally, the model's applicability across different cultural contexts and industries might be limited due to variations in the perception of job demands and resources. Cultural norms and industry-specific factors can influence how individuals perceive and respond to different aspects of their work environment (Häusser et al., 2010). Finally, the JD-R Model focuses on the relationship between job demands, resources, and well-being outcomes, but it might not capture all relevant factors that contribute to these outcomes, such as personality traits or non-work-related stressors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Conceptual Review

This section discusses job stress, employee behaviour, and the moderating role of social support.

Job Stress (JS)

In today's world, job stress has become a world-wide phenomenon, which is exhibited in every facet our work lives. Experts in this field have written and introduced many scientific and professional publications about job stress and its effects on employee well-being at the workplace. Nevertheless, an attempt to find a unified definition has proven complicated and elusive. For instance, Robbins and Stanghi (2012) conceptualizes JS as a dynamic state in which an individual is presented with an opportunity, limitations, or demands related to what he or she desires, the outcome of which is considered to be both unknown and crucial. Similarly, Parker and Decotiis (1983) discovered that people feel stress in a variety of ways that may be linked to their psychological states.

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Job stress results from an imbalance between a person's personality and their line of work; it is also a subjective cognition that can cause work-related feelings like rage, fear, anxiety, melancholy, or disgust (Ali Fouzia, et al., 2011). Also, Robbins (2004) identified job stress as a dynamic circumstance in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraints, or demand related to his desires, with the outcome seen to be both unclear and crucial. According to this view, stress is not always negative; it can also be beneficial when it provides opportunities for growth. Moorhead et al. (1998) defined stress as an individual's adaptive response to a stimulus that puts physical and psychological strain on them. In addition, Taylor (1995) views stress as a negative emotional experience followed by predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive, and behavioural changes aimed at either modifying the events or adapting to their consequences.

Furthermore, Bennett (2014) expresses stress as a wide variety of physical and psychological symptoms induced by a person's difficulties in adapting to a new environment. This indicates that stress can occur when an external circumstance creates a demand that threatens to exceed a person's capabilities and resources.

Causes of Job stress

Scholars with knowledge about job stress have (Taylor 2008; Beehr & Newman, 2017; Parker & Decotiis, 2014) identified various sources/causes of job stress that affects individuals at the workplace. According to Coetzee and De Villiers (2010) one of the aspects that contributes to job stress is workload. Excessive or unmanageable workload, tight deadlines, and unrealistic expectations can create stress. Feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work or

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consistently working long hours without adequate breaks can contribute to job stress. Suresh (2013) also opined that another source that can contribute to job stress is lack of control. When employees lack control over their work duties, decision-making processes, or ability to influence outcomes, it can lead to feeling of powerlessness and stress. Micromanagement or rigid organizational structures can contribute to this source of stress.

Also, Chetty et al. (2016) indicated that job insecurity and role ambiguity is another source of stress. Fear of losing one's job, concerns about layoffs, or uncertainty about future employment can lead to significant job insecurity. Economic instability, organizational restructuring, or industry changes may also contribute to job insecurity. Again, when an individual has an unclear job expectation, vague responsibilities or conflicting roles, it becomes difficult to define his/her role, thereby making the individual unsure about what is expected of them, or conflicting demands from different sources may also confuse the individual and lead to role ambiguity and subsequent stress.

Furthermore, Beehr (2014) uncovered that lack of work life balance and interpersonal conflict may also be another source of workplace stress. When there is an imbalance between work responsibilities and personal life commitments, it can contribute to stress. Long working hours, a lack of flexibility in work arrangements, a lack of time for leisure activities, and the inability to manage personal and family obligations can all contribute to occupational stress. Also, when employees find it difficult to interact with their colleagues and supervisors, or a lack of support and cooperation can contribute to job stress. For instance, Poor communication, unresolved

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conflicts, or bullying and harassment in the workplace can negatively affect an individual's well-being.

Effect of Job Stress

In researching job stress, the major concerns are its adverse impact on employee behaviour. The effects of stress extend beyond an individual's well-being and can significantly affect employee behaviour. Workers who experience stress at work attempt to avoid stressors in terms of decreased job performance, high absenteeism and turnover. Kai Chen (2022) conducted a systematic review of literature on job stress. The review showed that the outcomes of stress were complex and multifaceted. Kai Chen (2022) uncovered that the effects of JS could be physical, psychological, emotional or behavioral. Physically, employees who suffer from JS would show signs of low productivity, absenteeism, lack of concentration, or difficulty in communicating at the workplace.

Psychologically, employees who suffer from JS are likely to also show signs of depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, employees who were emotionally stressed would show signs of anger, aggression or frustration towards their colleagues. Regarding the consequences to job performance, employees who experienced a high level of stress at the workplace were likely to perform less and maintain normal productivity levels. Warraich et al. (2014) also investigated the "impact of stress on job performance: an empirical study of the employees of Private Sector Universities (Karachi, Pakistan)". The study was based on empirical research conducted on 133 employees of Karachi's private sector universities,

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which offered degrees in Business Administration, Engineering, Medicine, Textiles, and Fashion.

However, the data revealed that heavy workload, tight deadlines, job insecurity and role conflict, as well as inadequate monetary reward, were the leading causes of stress in employees which reduces output or productivity. In order to enhance Job performance and satisfaction, it was recommended companies can minimize stress by reducing workload, reducing role conflict, paying appropriate compensations; Employees are also given training and counselling. Similarly, Jermsittiparsert et al. (2021) discovered in a related study that job stress is the foundation for substantial problems with people's personal and professional lives. Higher levels of stress influence an individual's decision-making skills, which frequently leads to foolish or incorrect choices. When job stress becomes severe, issues arise, and the individual's emotional, cognitive, and physiological functioning is interrupted. Stress can be sudden or built up over time. It has a significant financial cost and People may experience stress when they are overworked, under pressure, fulfil deadlines, or have insufficient time to complete all of their tasks (Daniel, 2019).

Employee Behavior

To understand, describe, and modify individual behaviour. Scholars have been undertaking research in the field of employee behaviour. Several sciences have studied how people behave generally. It is the subject of countless books, essays, journal articles, and anthologies, which occasionally stark the differences between the individual opinions of the various disciplines. According to Von Rosenstiel (2011), Human behaviour is viewed

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as a function of the conditions that exist within an organization. It is how individuals act, think and feel in response to different situations at the workplace and it's influenced by a variety of factors including the environment, culture and personal experiences.

Similarly, Huczynski et al. (2013) defined an employee's behaviour within the organization as the field of study that investigates the impact that individual have on their behaviours within the organization, with the goal of applying such knowledge to improve an organization's effectiveness. The definition was divided into three parts. To begin, consider organizational behaviour as an investigative study of individuals and groups. Also included are the effects of organizational structure on human behaviour, as well as the use of knowledge to attain organizational performance. Other authors (Leiter et al., 2011; Moeller & Chung-Yan, 2013) provided a broad definition of employee behaviour.

Leiter et al. (2011) for instance outlined employee behavior as the responses of an employee towards a specific situation at the workplace. Often than not, employee behavior is vital for defining its interactions with other employees and what motivates it at work. Employees behave based on their culture and the organizations culture as well. Additionally, Moeller and Chung-Yan (2013) argue that an organization's culture influences employee behaviour. Even when there are disagreements, a company that promotes stakeholder respect usually elicits positive reactions. Understanding employee behavior can help the organization predict and explain why employees behave and act the way they do, and also help develop strategies to help change their behaviors.

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Determinants of employee behaviour

In literature, factors that influence employee behaviour can be broadly characterized into Internal and external factors. Internal factors include organizational culture, leadership styles, work environment, organizational polices and training and development whiles external factors consist of economic conditions, industry trends and societal influences. Organizational culture sets a tone for employee behaviour. It encompasses shared values, norms, and beliefs that guide employees' actions. A positive and supportive culture promotes behaviors such as teamwork, respect, and integrity. On the other hand, a toxic or unhealthy culture can foster negative behaviors like conflict, distrust, and unethical conduct (Mowbray, et al., 2015).

Another factor that can influence an employee behavior is work environment. According to Buchanan and Huczynski (2019) work environment is the physical and social environment that affects how an employee behaves at the workplace. A well-designed and comfortable physical environment can contribute to positive behavior, while a chaotic or poorly maintained environment may lead to stress and negative behaviour. The social environment may include relationships with colleagues and superiors at the workplace. A positive and supportive relationship promotes collaboration and cooperation, while toxic relationships can foster negativity and conflict.

Again, Huczynski et al. (2013) opined that training and development is another factor that influences employee behavior by equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies in performing their duties and roles. Training programs that focus on communication, teamwork, problem-

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solving, and leadership can promote positive behavior and enhance employee effectiveness. Finally, Employee behavior can be influenced by job satisfaction and motivation. Satisfied and motivated employees are more likely to exhibit positive behavior, such as going the extra mile, being proactive, and taking initiative. Factors such as recognition, autonomy, career growth opportunities, and meaningful work contribute to job satisfaction and motivation (Huczynski et al., 2013).

Social Support

Social support was developed over time through research and observation. The study of social support began in the 1970s as researchers (Cohen & McKay, 2020; Tajvidi &Wang, 2021; Bishop-Fitzpatrick et al., 2018) began to examine the ways which people cope with stress and adversities. The researchers found that, people who had Strong social support networks had Improved ability to handle stress, and had better mental and physical outcomes. Since then, researchers have continued to study social support and its benefits, and it has become an important area of study (Shuang et al., 2023). Social support according to (Cobb, 1976) is described as an individual's belief that he or she is liked, respected, and that his or her well-being is important as part of a social network of mutual duty.

The concept emphasized that the structure and quality of an individual's social network can affect their wellbeing and ability to cope with stressors. Chan, A.N.W. (2015) conducted a study on social support for improved work integration: perspectives from Canadian social purpose enterprise, using mixed methods and self-administered questions and discovered the prevalence and importance of work-centered social support.

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Social support can promote more sustainable attachment to work by addressing workplace challenges, ameliorating workplace conflict and stress, attending to non-vocational work barriers and building workers self-confidence and self-belief.

Karasek and Theorell (2008) posited workplace social support as "overall levels of helpful social interaction available on the job from coworkers and supervisors." In light of these perspectives and definitions, researchers defined social support as the assistance that employees receive from their supervisors and coworkers. In addition, Eisenberger et al. (2012) stated that the purpose of workplace support is to reduce anxiety and tension through the sharing of emotional, informative, and instrumental support both verbally and nonverbally. In accordance to this viewpoint, social support in the workplace can be defined as a flow of emotional concern, instrumental aid, and informational assistance offered to an employee in order to relieve stress. (Sundin et al., 2006). However, one significant challenge in workplace social support is the misalignment of needs between employees and their supporters. Employees may seek specific types of support that are not effectively provided by their colleagues or supervisors. For instance, an employee experiencing high stress may require emotional support such as empathy and understanding yet receive only instrumental support, such as advice or resources (Fink et al., 2018).

In line with the definitions, French et al. (2018) definition of social support was adopted for this study. Following this definition, social support is defined as the emotional, instrumental and informational resources that are

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available to employees through their interactions to other people at the workplace.

Emotional, Instrumental and Informational support

Social support investigators **(**Eisenberger et al.,2002; Karasek & Theorell, 1990; Sundin et al., 2006). Have identified several types of social support that can enhance employee behaviour. According to Moeller and Chung-Yan (2013), one of the aspects of social support that contributes to employee behavior at the workplace is emotional support. Emotional support refers to the comfort and empathy provided by supervisors and colleagues such as, listening, offering words of encouragement or providing a shoulder to cry on. Emotional support is important during stress or difficulties, as it helps employees feel heard, validated and cared for. Kelly et al. (2017) suggested that employees who receives emotional support from their supervisors are less likely to experience stress and frustration however, over-dependence can become a significant issue. Individuals who receive emotional support may become reliant on it, leading to diminished self-efficacy and coping skills. This dependency can create a cycle where individuals struggle to manage their emotions independently, undermining their resilience in the long-term. (Kelly et al., 2017).

Väisänen et al. (2017) also opined that providing instrumental or material support to employees will encourage assertiveness at the workplace. This type of support includes providing an employee with assistance, such as tangible and intangible resources to help them accomplish tasks. Instrumental support is important during times of crisis and hardships, as it can help individuals meet their basic needs and overcome obstacles. For instance,

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providing tools needed to complete a project, or stepping in to take on some of the workload when a coworker is overwhelmed can contribute to social support (French et al., 2018) One significant issue is inequity. Recipients may feel uncomfortable accepting help, particularly if they perceive it as a favor that creates a sense of indebtedness. This can lead to guilt and a reluctance to accept future support, ultimately hindering the effectiveness of instrumental assistance (Shen, 2019).

Informational support in the workplace involves providing coworkers with useful information to help them solve problems and make decisions. It can be in the form of sharing knowledge about policies and feedback, or providing guidance on how to perform a task or complete a project. Studies have shown that employees who receive informational support are more likely to have better problem-solving skills and may be better equipped to handle stressful situations (Shen, 2019). One of the primary issues is information overload. When individuals receive too much information or conflicting advice, it can overwhelm them, making decision-making more difficult rather than easier. In high-stress situations, this excess of information can heighten anxiety rather than alleviate it (Shah et al., 2023). Having emotional, instrumental and informational support from coworkers and supervisors can contribute to a positive work environment and create a supportive and collaborative workplace culture.

Importance of Social support

According to Duan et al. (2019) social support reduces stress, enhances productivity and improves job satisfaction. Having emotional support can help employees feel more connected to their coworkers and can provide a sense of

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belonging and validation. Working in a friendly environment encourages good mental health and general wellbeing. Support also acts as a buffer to reduce stress. Having supportive relationships at work helps employees to cope with job demands and reduce negative impacts of stressors. Olsen and Mikkelsen (2017) also suggested that social support enhance collaboration and teamwork. When employees feel supported, they are more likely to communicate openly, share knowledge and cooperate with their colleagues. Supportive work relationships foster a positive team environment, facilitate effective problem-solving, and improve team cohesion and effectiveness.

Empirical Review

This chapter critically reviews literature pertaining to the purpose and objectives of this study.

Job Stress and Employee Behavior

Shah et al. (2023) conducted research on how managers' autocratic leadership may moderate the unethical behavior of their subordinates when they are under stress. The data examined by 80 bank managers in Pakistan regarding their perceptions of the autocratic behaviour of top managers and the unethical behaviour of their 240 subordinates supports all the hypothesized associations, according to data collected from the managers regarding their workplace stress. Subordinates were incentivized to act unethically by their supervisors' positive misplaced aggressiveness, which was a result of their working stress. Additionally, it was shown that the association between supervisors' workplace stress and misplaced aggression was moderated by dictatorial leadership.

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Early researchers have contributed to job stress and employee behaviour. For instance, Kai Chen (2022) examined the factors that influences work stress of primary school teachers with a target population of primary school teachers in the Tianfu new area in Sichuan China. Data was collected from 249 primary school teachers using questionnaires and the results shows that four variable factors account for 78.9 % of teacher's job stress and the remaining 21 could be used to determine the other factors related to job stress. Again, there's ambiguity of role work load, lack of autonomy and relationship with others, having a significant influence on primary teachers.

In Greece, Zampetakis et al. (2022) conducted a study on exploring job resources as predictors of employees' effective coping with stress and discovered that employees' ability to manage job stress was positively impacted by their managers' leadership and humour styles, interactions with subordinates, and peer support. Furthermore, the authors revealed that the manager's leadership style interacts with the manager-subordinate relationship quality and co-workers' support, while the latter interacts with the manager's humour style and manager-subordinate relationship quality. The study model explained half of the variance in efficient coping with stress assessments.

In Bangladesh, Vuong et al. (2022) used a self-report questionnaire from a sample of 694 full-time employees in Vietnam's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to investigate the impact of social support on job performance through organizational commitment and innovative work behaviour. The study found that strong social support at work can improve employee performance, as well as creative work behaviour and organizational dedication.

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A study investigated workplace social support in corona time as a moderator of the association between leader-subordinate fit and entrepreneurial behaviour in an Iraqi private higher education institution. A sample of 127 respondents was chosen, and questionnaires were distributed to them via Google Form. The data was gathered with JASP. According to the P.E fit theory, entrepreneur behaviour was significantly predicted by both ($\beta = 0.44$, $t = 6.65$, $p < .001$, 95%CI = 0.29 to 0.53) and complementary fit ($\beta = 0.46$, $t = 6.91$, $p < .001$, 95%CI = 0.31 to 0.56). However, contrary to the buffering hypothesis, the semi-partial Bayes Factor (BF) statistics show that workplace social support did not modify the associations between supplemental fit/complementary fit and entrepreneurial behaviours Ahmad (2022).

Another study the effect of employee perceived training on job satisfaction: the mediating role of workplace stress conducted by Sesen and Ertan (2022). In this study, a cross-sectional questionnaire was administered to 12 different early homecare centres in Northern Cyprus, with a sample size of 317 full-time nurses. The findings revealed that Certified Nursing Assistants' perceptions of their training have a positive effect on their level of job satisfaction and a negative effect on workplace stress, whereas workplace stress mediates the relationship between their perception of training and job satisfaction. The data reveal that, while training motivation and support have an impact on job satisfaction, access to training and training benefits have no detectable affect, with workplace stress acting as a mediating factor.

Using a sample size of 259 employees, (Junaedi, M. and Wulani, F. 2021) investigated the moderating effect of person-organization fit on the relationship between workplace stress and deviant behaviours of frontline

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staff. To test the hypothesis, the study employed a partial least square structural equation modeling. The results demonstrate a clear connection between job stress and frontline and organizational deviance. The relationship between job stress and frontline deviance is moderated by P-O fit; higher P-O fit indicates stronger link between frontline deviance and job stress. The association between job stress and organizational deviance is not mitigated by P-O fit.

Ishanti Enny et al. (2021) reviewed the influence of job stress and financial reward, both OCB and OCB, on performance. In this study, researchers used explanatory and quantitative method. A literature study was conducted to collect data, and data analysis was done using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) and Smart Partial Least Squares (PLS) tools. The findings of this study suggest that: H1: Job stress has no discernable impact on OCB; H2: Financial remuneration has a large effect on OCB; and H3: The impact of OCB on employee performance is strong.

Alternatively, Tran et al. (2021) researched on when a supportive workplace improves work performance. Data was collected from 900 healthcare workers utilizing a questionnaire methodology that had been adjusted and refined, from the original scales used in prior studies. The hypothesis was investigated by applying the partial least squares (PLS) method. This study's findings demonstrate that job autonomy, intrinsic drive, and job satisfaction are critical for the relationship between perceived support and work performance, with the perceived value of social media platforms being a major misleading element. The findings further confirm that felt stress has a negative moderating influence on the connection between job

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satisfaction and work performance, reducing the impact of job satisfaction on employee work performance.

Chauhan R et al. (2019) conducted empirical research on building performance services using transformational leadership analysis, work stress, and work motivation, and discovered 1) the impact of transformative leadership on employees' desire to work at PT Meritindo Sejahtera Jakarta. 2) Job stress has no impact on employee motivation at PT Meritindo Sejahtera Jakarta.3) The impact of transformative leadership on the performance of PT Meritindo Sejahtera personnel. 4) how work stress affects PT Meritindo Sejahtera Jakarta workers' service performance. 5) How motivation affects employee performance and loyalty at PT Meritindo Sejahtera.

To reduce workplace stress, Foy et al. (2019) explored how to manage work-life conflict, social support, and job performance in Ireland. Multiple linear regression analysis was utilized to assess the relationship between the independent variables in the study. The results showed that work-life conflict positively connected with workplace stress, social support negatively correlated with workplace stress, and job performance negatively correlated with workplace stress (p o 0.05). The findings also showed a strong correlation between the dependent variable, workplace stress, and the variables, gender and direct reports.

An empirical study on combating toxic workplace environments was carried out in Pakistan. Self-administered questionnaires are used to collect data, and the sample size consists of 267 health sector professionals. The results showed that job stress was a statistically significant mediator between those elements and job productivity, while job productivity had a negative

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significant link with aspects of a toxic workplace. In summary, it is imperative for enterprises to address and eradicate the underlying causes of a toxic work environment in order to secure their prosperity and success (Foy, Tommy et al., 2019).

Kelly et al. (2017) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the effects of social activities, social networks, social support, and social interactions on cognitive functioning in healthy older adults. The evaluation included 39 papers in all, with three RCTs, 34 observational studies, and two genetic investigations. Evidence suggests a relationship between (1) social activity and global cognition and overall executive functioning, working memory, visual hospital abilities and processing speed, but not episodic memory, verbal fluency, reasoning or attention; (2) social networks and global cognition but not episodic memory, attention, or processing speed; (3) social support and global cognition and episodic memory but not attention or processing speed; and (4) CMSR and episodic memory.

In order to identify contributing factors that have been perceived as significant work risks, Singh et al. (2016) investigated a conceptual study on occupational stress (also known as job stress or work stress) and its effects. The findings of this research demonstrate that occupational stress is frequently caused by unforeseen obligations and demands that are incompatible with an individual's expectations, knowledge, and abilities and so limit their capacity.

In South Africa, Coetzee and De Villiers (2010) explored the origins of job stress, work engagement and career orientations of employees in South Africa. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the relationship between employees' sources of workplace stress, work engagement and career

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orientation and how they varied with respect to these variables in terms of socio-demographic contextual factors such as race, gender, employment position and age. This study involved a sample of 90 employees. The findings revealed substantial disparities in the three variables between males and females, blacks and whites, permanent and temporary employees, and various age groups.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is based on revolutionary ideas that were evident in the empirical investigations reviewed previously. The framework was created based on the study objectives and depicts how the constructs are related to one another. The framework is divided into three sections. The first component is job stress, which is followed by employee behavior and, finally, social support. (See figure 1). Job stress is regarded as an independent variable, representing various stressors and demands individuals experience in the workplace. High workload, time constraints, role ambiguity, lack of control, and interpersonal difficulties are all causes of stressors at the workplace (Sesen & Ertan 2022).

Furthermore, Employee behavior is the dependent variable in the framework, reflecting the range of actions and responses being positive or negative exhibited by employees as a result of job stress. Employee behavior encompasses various dimensions, including job performance, absenteeism, turnover intentions, workplace relationships, and job satisfaction (Vuong et al., 2022). Social support is introduced as a moderating variable in the framework. It represents the informational, instrumental, and emotional support individuals receive from their social networks, including supervisors,

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colleagues, friends, and family. Social support can buffer the negative effects of job stress on employee behavior by providing individuals with coping mechanisms, advice, and encouragement (Jolly et al., 2021).

The moderating role of social support suggests the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour can be influenced by the level and quality of social support individuals perceive and receive. High Levels of social support can mitigate the negative Impact of Job Stress on employee behavior, whereas low levels of social support can exacerbate the effects of job stress (Jolly et al., 2021).

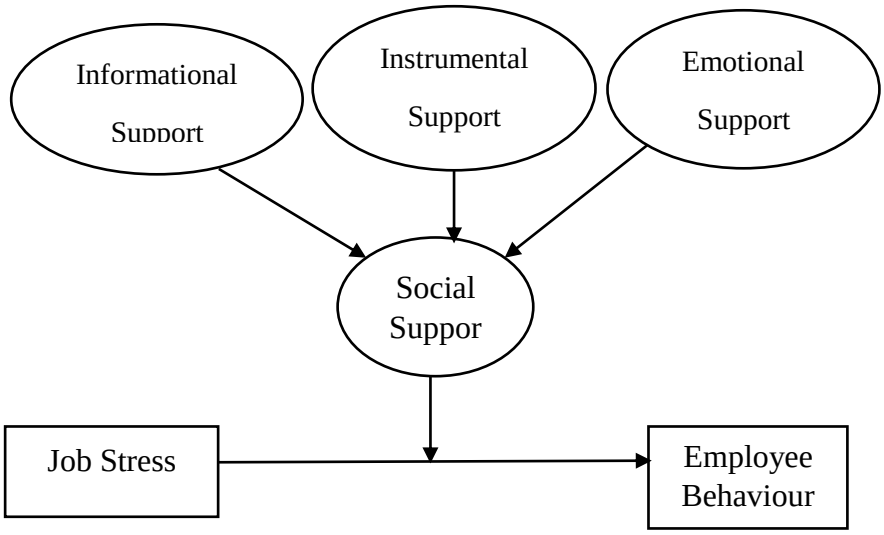

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for the study
Source: Author's Construct, (2023)

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on how the research was carried out. It provides thorough information on the following: research design, research approach, study area, sampling procedures, data collecting instrument, population, reliability and validity tests, data processing analysis, and data collection questionnaires.

Philosophy of the Study

According to Kuhn (1970), a research philosophy is a set of scientific beliefs and agreements about how problems should be understood and addressed. Philosophies establish the theories that support research methodologies and interpretations involve broad research orientations (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). As a result, they serve as a framework of perception that directs the researcher's actions (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). The research conveys the researcher's core assumptions and ideas about how the universe is. Over the years, social science research has been influenced by five primary philosophies namely: interpretivism, positivism, critical realism, postmodernism, and pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2016).

Each of these research ideologies brings something distinctive and worthwhile to the research they are conducting (Neuman, 2004), Therefore, it is important for a researcher to become familiar with the specific research philosophy that will be suitable for the study being done. Due to the quantitative character of the data that would be gathered, positivist philosophy was deemed appropriate for this study.

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According to Guba and Licoln (1994), positivism is a framework of thought that accepts arguments and can be supported by evidence from science and serves as a basis for generalisation. Positivists contend that scientific investigation may reveal the objective truth about the world (Bryman, 2004).

Positivists view social science research as comparable to natural science research because they contend that social reality is comprised of objective facts that, researchers can measure precisely and evaluate using statistics. According to Saunders et al. (2016), positive thinkers value thoroughness, repeatability, and the concluding test of knowledge. They believe that if they comprehensively characterize their concepts, accurately measure the facts, and adhere to objective research criteria, multiple observers examining the same facts will reach the same conclusions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Positivist proponents rely on deductive reasoning to formulate theories that can be tested using "fixed, predetermined research designs and objective measures" (Neuman, 2004). Positivism is an appealing philosophy because it affirms the importance of science and maintains a clear distinction between the true and the false.

Study Area

The study area is established by geography to limit the extent of the researcher's investigation (Neuman, 2004). They are intended to ensure that data and analysis are restricted to a certain area when a project is initiated. The study was carried out at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), which is located in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. Cape Coast is a settlement in the centre of Ghana's coastline. It is situated on a low point that protrudes into the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean, 75 miles (120 kilometres) southwest of

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Ghana's capital, Accra. The College of Distance Education (CoDE) functioned as the unit of analysis, and due to the nature of their work hours, the research was predominantly focused on CoDE staff.

Research Approach

A research approach is comprised of a substantial body of presumptions that guide systematic processes for data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell & Clarke, 2007). The selection of a method and whether it is appropriate for a certain study is one point of debate in social science research (Bell & Bryman 2007). The argument in academia about whether a certain approach to social inquiry is appropriate has progressed from one stage to another in recent years (Babbie, 2007). These discussions have led to a variety of practical considerations that have been made when selecting a particular research method, such as the nature of the research topic, the research objectives, the type of research question being examined, the context of the research, time and budget constraints, the availability of equipment (including funding), and the expertise and personality of the researcher (Blaikie, 2000).

The three main categories of research methods or approaches to a scientific study are quantitative, mixed-method, and qualitative approaches, with each approach adhering to a specific set of research assumptions and research orientations (Babbie, 2007; Cohen et al., 2007; Neuman, 2004). Despite the ongoing debate, many scholars have generally agreed on this point. The quantitative approach is linked to experimental and survey research, whereas the qualitative approach is linked to action and case study research.

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The combined assumption of quantitative and qualitative research is known as the mixed method.

A quantitative research strategy was chosen as the best option based on the presumptions and orientations of each approach.

In empirical studies, quantitative research places an emphasis on quantification. Surveys and experiments are used to gather data that is then edited and tallied in numbers, enabling statistical study of the gathered data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). According to Cohen et al. (2007), quantitative researchers measure variables on a sample of participants and use statistics like correlation, regression, and relative frequencies to express the relationship between variables. This allows them to test theories. Quantitative research usually begins with a set of theories, hypotheses, and/or research questions that the researcher plans to test to see if the theories are right. (Bui, 2009). Since almost all quantitative studies follow a linear research route, use experiments, surveys, and test hypotheses to foresee general patterns of human conduct, they all rely on the positivist approach (Neuman, 2004)

Research Design

The study will utilize a descriptive research design, which aims to provide an accurate and detailed representation of a phenomenon, event or situation (Queirós, Faria, and Almeida, 2017). Descriptive research is known for producing a large number of responses from a wide spectrum of people, giving strong statistical results, and allowing specific questions of interest to be asked with greater confidence (Apuke, 2017). The descriptive design is appropriate for this study as it will provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being investigated, which describes the relationship between a

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set of variables (dependent and independent). As a result, the study will rely on this research design because it is relevant to the research objectives. The researcher's use of the study philosophy, approach, and design is intended to identify any relationship between the variables being studied.

Population

A survey population is any group of individuals or organizations who share one or more of the qualities that the researcher is interested in. According to Creswell (2002), a population is the total number of elements (people or objects) that share a particular characteristic, as determined by the researcher's sample criteria. According to Saunders (2007), the term "population" describes the whole set of instances from which a sample is collected or taken. The study's target population will include the whole CoDE workforce. The College of Distance Education has two hundred and forty 240 staff. There are one hundred and sixty-four senior staff (164) and seventy-six junior staff (76), There are also one hundred (100) males in this population and one hundred and forty (140) females.

Sampling Procedure

Sampling, according to Punch (2005), is the process of selecting a subset of a population to evaluate hypotheses about the entire population. Punch believes that no research, be it quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of the two, can cover everything; therefore, no one can investigate everyone doing everything everywhere. The survey included 150 employees from a population of 240 employees. This study's sample was drawn from the general population using the sampling table developed by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970. The study met the sample size assumptions,

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including the confidence level, margin of error, and population variability The study used a simple random sample technique to acquire data from the respondents. According to Bryman (2016), the simple random procedure is a probability sampling strategy that ensures every instance in the population has an equal chance of being chosen for the sample.

Source of Data

There are two kinds of data collection methods: primary and secondary. Primary data sources are information collected and processed directly by the researcher, such as analyses, polls, interviews, and focus groups. (Creswell, 2002). Public records, statistics, and historical documents constitute the secondary data source (Baskerville & Myers, 2009). The primary data was used for the research. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010). Primary data is the most genuine, illuminating, and truth-revealing type of information. Primary data will be collected using a research questionnaire which will be personally administered by the researcher and a series of in-depth interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

The investigator collected data from the selected staffs of the college of distance education. The questionnaires are personally administered to respondents which contain series of structured questions relating to the subject with the aim of elucidating first – hand information. Respondents were allowed sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. The data was collected in two stages: the distribution of informed consent and the distribution of the study questionnaire. The informed consent occurs between the 5th and 15th of December, 2023, between the hours of 9:00am and 4:00pm. During this time,

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the researcher met with the respondents in their various offices to explain the need to participate in the research project that aims to investigate the impact of job stress on employee behaviour and the role of management. The researcher also briefs them on confidentiality, anonymity, and their rights as study respondents.

Data Collection Instrument

Based on the study's aims and approach, a structured questionnaire will be used as the primary data collection tool to collect information from respondents. A structured questionnaire is an important instrument for data collection since it allows for a comparison of one viewpoint to another. Closed-ended questionnaires will be utilized because they specify all possible answers and produce more interpretable and tabulatable results. Simon (2022) defines a questionnaire as a form of data collecting in which each member is asked to answer the same set of questions in a predetermined order. This is to say that each person answers the identical questions since standard instructions are provided to respondents.

Therefore, adopting a questionnaire will help to improve measurement consistency. As a result, questionnaires are the primary data collection tool employed in quantitative studies and thus the most appropriate (Rahi, 2017). The questionnaire is self-created based on reviews of related literature relevant to the research objectives. Verma (2017) emphasizes that the use of questionnaires cannot be underestimated because they can collect a great amount of information in a relatively short period of time. The suggested questionnaire consisted of four components. The first component of the questionnaire asked demographic questions such as sex, age, number of years

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worked, academic qualification, marital status, and employment category or level.

The second part contained eight items for measuring work-life balance. Items were measured using a 7-Likert-Scale created by Valcour (2007), with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 7 indicating strong agreement. In the third and fourth sections, 15 items each were used to measure workplace policies and job involvement in a courteous manner, and all things were measured using a 7-Likert scale, with 1 representing Never and 7 representing Always. The workplace policy measures were based on (Yuile et al. 2012), while the work engagement scales were based on Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). According to Zikmund (2003), questionnaires are easy and effective data gathering instruments in social science research, hence using a survey questionnaire for staff was deemed appropriate. They are less costly and less likely to cause data inaccuracies. Survey questionnaires allow respondents to openly express their thoughts, inner beliefs, and attitudes. As highlighted by Opie (2004), the questionnaire is reasonably inexpensive; respondents in remote regions can be contacted; the questions are standardised; and anonymity is guaranteed.

Pilot testing

Even though all the items on the survey instrument were employed and adapted from previous and validated literature, the researcher pre-tested it through pilot-testing. This is to ensure that the questionnaires are relevant, clear, and sensitive. Pilot testing is a small-scale experiment in which a few respondents reply to a research instrument and comment on its practicality and mechanics. (Rañeses, 2022). To get the right validity and reliability for the

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current study. It was also pre-tested because some of the survey items on the questionnaire employed from validated literature were in positive and negative shapes which the researcher converted all of them to positives.

To assure the reliability of a study instrument, Cronbach's Alpha should be at least 0.7 (DeVellis, 2016). The suggestions and results from the pilot-testing exercise is used to improve the instrument for the actual data collection exercise, which contributes positively to the instrument's finalization.

Data Processing and Analysis

A careful data preparation is required for conducting an accurate analysis of the collected data and acquiring undistorted statistical results (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Data processing is a collection of screening and transformation techniques designed to address issues such as missing data, aberrant presence, non-normality, non-linearity, heteroscedasticity, multi collinearity, and singularity (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996). As a consequence, these considerations were incorporated into data processing and analysis. Using PLS-SEM, the data collected by the survey questionnaire was processed and analysed. It was suitable because it incorporates the benefits of multiple other multivariate processes, such as regression, factor analysis, correlation, etc. (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004). The model is utilised to guarantee adequate levels of validity and dependability.

Composite Reliability was utilised to assess reliability, whereas convergent and discriminant validity were utilised to assess validity. To begin with, PLS-SEM involves model specification, where the research model was outlined, including the relationships between job stress, employee behaviours, and the moderating effect of social support. Following this, a measurement

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model assessment was conducted. Reliability was evaluated through Composite Reliability, ensuring that the measurement scales demonstrate internal consistency. Validity was also assessed using both convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted, AVE) and discriminant validity (using the Fornell-Larcker criterion), confirming that the constructs measured their intended concepts (Hair et al., 2017). Path analysis was performed to explore the direct relationships between job stress and employee behaviours, along with the moderating effect of social support. To test the significance of these relationships, a bootstrapping procedure was utilized, which provided confidence intervals and p-values for the estimated path coefficients. Finally, results of the PLS-SEM analysis provided valuable insights into the relationships among job stress on employee behaviour outcomes and the extent to which social support moderates this relationship (Hair et al., 2017).

Structural Equations Modelling (SEM)

PLS-SEM is a software that allows researchers to add unseen factors into their study by indirectly quantifying them using indicator variables (Rezaei & Ghodsi, 2014). In addition, a standardized regression coefficient is calculated for the pathway connecting the structures. It reduces the residual variance of the endogenous construct by estimating the nexuses of the model's path using available data. It has two components: measurement models and structural models. Measurement models are used to validate constructs and adjust scales, whereas structural models are used to show how the research constructs relate to one another. (Hair et al, 2014) PLS-SEM generates path model linkages that maximize the R2 values of endogenous variables. It is also more beneficial in the presence of less developed theory (Rezaei, 2015).

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According to Heneler et al. (2009), structural equation modelling has two types of measurement scales: reflective and formative. In the reflective scale, the constructs cause the study's indicators, whereas, in the formative scale, the indicators cause the study's constructs. The reflective measurement scale was utilised in this study because the constructs caused all of the indicators. Jeon (2015) states that PLS-SEM has several advantages. First, SEM employs latent variables, allowing multiple indicators to capture the reliability and validity of a construct. SEM clarifies the causal equation model between latent variables, in contrast to regression.

The ability to regress one or more independent factors affecting one or more dependent variables is another advantage of SEM. Using SEM, a researcher can also demonstrate the total, direct, and indirect effects of multiple exogenous and endogenous factors that can be calculated simultaneously. Lastly, SEM can simultaneously conduct confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. In keeping with the aforementioned benefits of SEM, this study examined the various hypotheses using PLS-SEM.

Ethical considerations

The research will involve human subjects as such the following ethical guidelines will be put into place for the research period:

1. Permission from relevant authorities: The researcher will obtain the right permissions from the relevant authorities and persons (Supervisor, University authorities and the Management of the College of Distance education) in order to conduct the research.

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2. The researcher will maintain the dignity and wellbeing of respondents and ensure that there will be no conflict of interest, at all times during the course of the study.
3. Informed consent: At all times, researcher will clearly explain to respondents the essence and scope of the study and the role sampled respondents will play in helping to meet the study objectives. At every instance, respondents will be given an open chance to opt-out of the study if they so wish. At no point will respondents be coerced or trapped into participating in the study.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality: The research data collected will remain anonymous and confidential throughout the study and the researcher will obtain the permission of the respondent to use the information provided for the research.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between Job stress and Employee behaviour: the moderating role of social support among the staff of College of Distance Education at the University of Cape Coast. This chapter presents the results and discussions of the data collected from the one hundred and fifty respondents who participated in the study. Standardized questionnaire was the method used in collecting data. The research objectives were statistically analysed using Structural Equation Model (Smart PLS-SEM). The first part of this chapter explores the demographic background of respondent whiles the second part explores the results of the research objectives.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section examines the demographics and background information of the staff who completed the research questionnaires. Each respondent provided complete demographic characteristics of himself or herself. Following the literature review, five demographic characteristics were considered relevant for this study: age, gender, highest academic qualification, job category and working experience. The demographic features were relevant because they can allow the researcher to determine whether the respondents have the required level of maturity and authority in providing meaningful information on which research reports and decisions can be made. The information is displayed in Table 1 below.

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Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	66	44.4
	Female	84	55.6
	Total	**150**	**100**
Age	20-25	11	7.3
	26-35	76	50.3
	36-45	49	32.5
	46-55	12	8.6
	Above 55	2	1.3
	Total	**150**	**100**
Highest	Junior High School	13	8.6
Academic	Senior High School	44	29.1
Qualification	Diploma/Technical	32	21.2
	University Degrees	42	28.5
	Others	19	12.6
	Total	**150**	**100**
Work Experience	1 year and below	61	40.4
	2-5 years	60	40.4
	6-9 years	21	13.9
	Above 9 years	8	5.3
	Total	**150**	**100**
Job Category	Junior Staff	16	10.6
	Senior Staff	70	47.1
	Senior Member	64	42.4
	Total	**150**	**99.3**

Source: field survey, Annie, (2023)

Table 1 above displays the results of the analysis of various demographics and professional characteristics of the respondents. First and foremost, the gender distribution of the sample is notable. The majority of respondents were identified as female. With 84 (55.6%) females and 66 (44.4%) males, the organization demonstrates a balanced representation, indicative of a welcoming and inclusive workplace culture. McKinsey & Company's 2020 report, 'Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters,' emphasizes the importance of gender diversity in achieving organizational performance. The survey emphasizes that gender-diverse organizations are more likely to

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outperform their less diverse peers, with a 36% likelihood of financial returns above the industry median (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

The respondents' age distribution also provides insightful information as well. Over half (57.6%) of respondents were predominantly younger adults between 20 and 35 years old. These groups of people are likely to be at an earlier stage in their careers, which might affect their perceptions of job stress and their reported levels of social support. 41.1% of respondents were also middle-aged adults (36-55 years). These participants might have more work experience and potentially different responses to job stress and social support compared to younger employees. The older adults (Above 55) in the population were relatively few (1.3%). This information is important as younger employees may experience and manage stress differently compared to their older counterparts, potentially due to differences in job roles, life stages, and expectations (Dodanwala et al., 2021)

The academic qualifications of respondents were also noted in Table 2. 13 (8.6%) of respondents had Junior High School qualifications, 44 (29.1%) had senior high school qualifications, 32 (21.2%) had Diploma/Technical education qualifications and 42 (28.5%) had University degrees. Senior High School (29.1%) and University Degrees (28.5%) make up over half of the sample, likely indicating a relatively educated workforce. Professionals who have attained such high educational levels may be aware of how to cope with job stress (Odonkor & Adams, 2021; Ampofo et al., 2020). Also, the work experience of respondents was recorded.

A high proportion of respondents had 1-5 Years of Experience (80.8%). This suggests that many staff members are relatively new to their

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roles, which could affect their experiences with job stress and their behavior at work. A relatively small group of respondents had long-term experience (Above 9 years, 5.3%). This small group might provide insights into long-term career impacts on employee behavior and stress.

Further, Table 2 provides information on the job category of respondents. 16 (10.6%) of respondents were junior members, 70 (47.1%) were senior staff and 64 (42.4%) were senior members. This shows that most of the respondents are in senior roles, which could imply a higher level of responsibility and possibly higher stress levels. These roles may also come with better support systems, which can be a focal point for the study.

In conclusion, the demographic characteristics suggest a workforce that is largely young and fairly educated, with a significant portion in senior roles.

Data Screening

Data screening is the process of analysing research data for missing data, outliers, and normality assumption answers to determine whether the information is ready for further statistical analysis (Coakes, 2006). As a result, before to the analysis, the research instrument items were evaluated using SPSS for data input accuracy, missing values, and outliers. Missing data is defined as an unaddressed item on a survey instrument by a responder, whether intentionally or inadvertently (Hair et al., 2006). Copies of answered questionnaires with missing data were not used in the analysis.

Outliers, on the other hand, are extreme data values with a unique combination of attributes that are different from other data values (Hair et al., 2006). The effect of an outlier may be significant on the subsequent model fit, parameter estimates, and standard errors in the dataset (Bryne, 2013), so outliers are

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deemed as an important aspect of the analysis. In this study, Mahalanobis distance statistics was used to test the outliers, which were dropped.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics of the various variables in the study have been reported in Table 2 below. It comprises the mean, median, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, as well as the observed lowest and maximum values.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	Mean	Median	Observed min	Observed max	Std. Dev.	kurtosis	Skew.	Observations used
Emotional support	0.000	-0.015	-2.267	2.465	1.000	-0.270	-0.069	150.000
Employee behaviour	0.000	0.143	-3.008	1.767	1.000	0.011	-0.538	150.000
Informational Support	0.000	-0.182	-2.091	2.252	1.000	-0.490	0.138	150.000
Instrumental Support	0.000	-0.003	-1.997	1.987	1.000	-0.705	0.075	150.000
Job Stress	0.000	-0.104	-2.042	2.233	1.000	-0.751	0.147	150.000
Social Support	0.000	-0.088	-2.302	2.247	1.000	-0.412	0.109	150.000

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

This section focuses on descriptive statistics for the study's variables, including mean, median, standard deviation, maximum and lowest values, skewness, and kurtosis. The skewness and kurtosis values provide insight into the shape and distribution of the data. Table 2 above shows that the highest value of kurtosis was -0.751, while the lowest was 0.01. The maximum value of skewness was -0.538, while the lowest was -0.069. Acceptable values of skewness fall between -3 and +3 and kurtosis is appropriate from a range of -10 and +10 when utilising SEM (Brown, 2006). This means that the data for the study was normally distributed and had a bell-shape. The result is however conclusive that the data has no issues of normality.

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Analysis of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)

The analysis of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) commenced with the initiation of data analysis, where emphasis was placed on elucidating the structural model specification. A pivotal facet of this initial phase involved a comprehensive evaluation of the foundational qualities inherent in the measurement model within the framework of PLS-SEM. These characteristics included important measures including Cronbach's alpha, construct reliability, composite reliability (CR), convergent validity (average variance extracted), multicollinearity (VIF), and discriminant validity. As proposed by Chin (1998), Dillon-Goldstein's rho, commonly known as rho A or Joreskog, developed as a noticeably superior composite reliability metric in the context of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). This statistic outperforms the standard Cronbach's alpha, allowing for a more detailed assessment of dependability within the SEM framework.

The rigorous examination of these measurement model features was critical in establishing a firm basis of validity and reliability for the investigation. According to the findings of scholars such as Straub (1989) and Henseler et al., (2009), this approach was performed with the overriding goal of imbuing the future analysis of structural model results with meaningful significance.

Assessment of PLS-SEM

The study continued the data analysis by presenting the structural model specification and assessing the fundamental measurement model qualities in PLS-SEM, including Cronbach alpha, construct reliability, composite reliability (CR), convergent validity (average variance extracted),

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multicollinearity (VIF), and discriminant validity. These measurement model features were evaluated to ensure that the study had sufficient validity and reliability in order to derive meaning from the structural model results (Fiati, 2019).

Model Specification (Structural and Measurement)

This section specifies the structure of the model used in this research. It identifies both exogenous and endogenous variables, as well as the moderating variable, and their associated indicators. There was one exogenous variable with one endogenous variable. The exogenous variable is job stress (JBS). The endogenous variable is employee behaviour (EMB) with social support (SOS) as the moderating variable. The moderating variable was then broken down into three sub-variables: emotional support, informational support, and instrumental support. The exogenous variable, job stress, was measured by nine indicators (JBS1, JBS2, JBS3, …JBS9). The moderating variable, social support, is measured by fourteen indicators (SOS1, SOS2, SOS3,… SOS14). The endogenous variable, employee behaviour, is measured by ten indicators (EMB1, EMB2, EMB3… EMB10). The study predicts that social support will effectively mitigate the harmful effects of job stress on employee behaviour.

In line with the theoretical foundations of system theory and institutional theory as inferred from this survey, the investigation empirically examines the research questions using Smart-PLS. Figure 1 and 2 below present the study's specified measurement and structural models.

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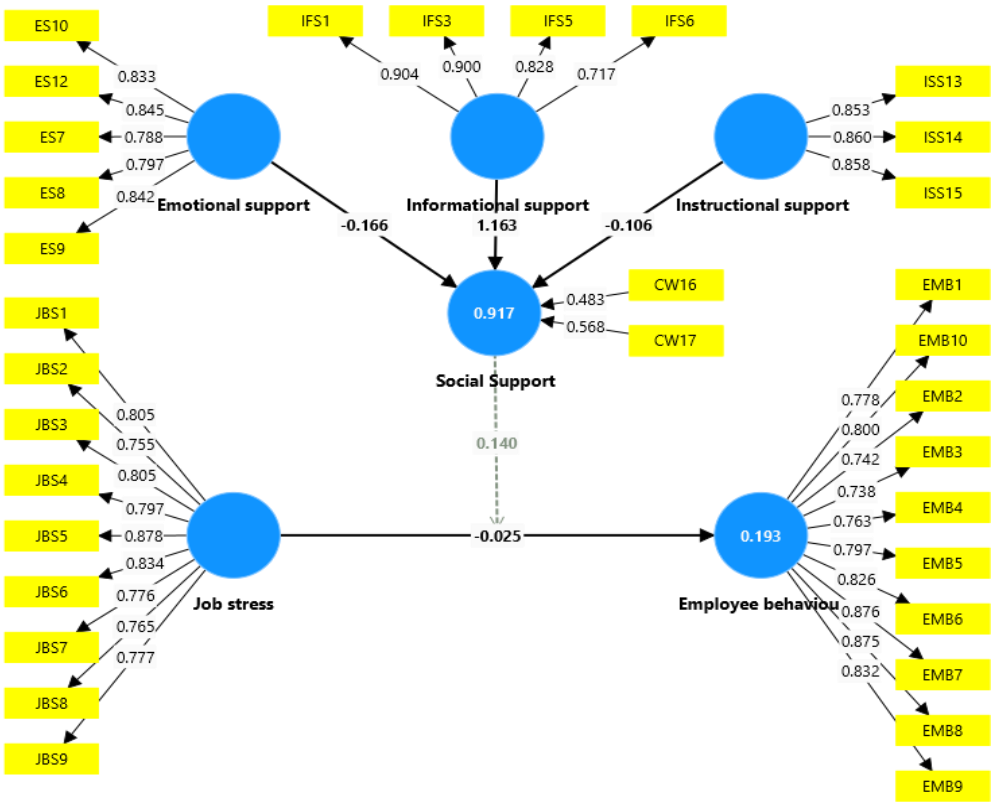

Figure 3: Specified Measurement and Structural Model

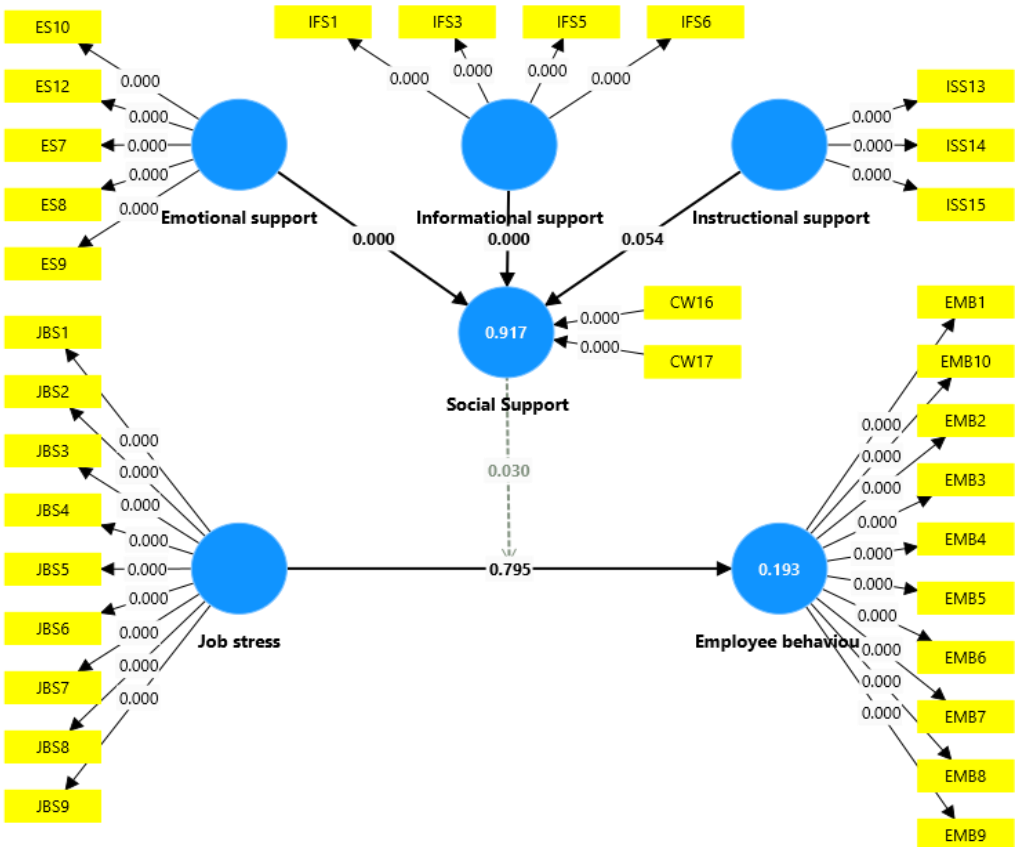

Figure 4: Structural Model for Research Objectives

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Objectives 1: How does job stress influence employee behaviour, such as proactive and counterproductive behaviour?

The study's first research question intended to analyse the influence of job stress on employee behaviour among the personnel of the College of Distance Education. The study's fundamental assumption was that job stress influenced how employees behaved in the workplace.

The measuring model comprises a reliability and validity assessment for the scales and data. The reflective outer model is evaluated by examining the reliability of the individual items [indicator reliability], the reliability of each latent variable otherwise internal consistency [Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, rho_A], construct validity- convergent validity [Average Variance Extracted], and discriminant validity [Fornell-Lacker criteria] (Schuberth et al., 2018; Garson, 2016). The findings are provided as follows.

Table 3: Construct Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Behaviour	0.939	0.947	0.948	0.647
Job Stress	0.931	0.949	0.941	0.640

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

The item's reliability was examined using composite reliability (CR). Table 3 above demonstrated that all the variables had the reliability measures above the acceptable acceptable thresholds (average variance extracted > 0.50, composite reliability > 0.70), as advised by scholars (Hair et al., 2013; Nunnally, 1978). First and foremost, indicator reliability (Cronbach alpha, CA) measures internal consistency reliability. It measures how closely the items in a construct or scale correspond with one another. It is clear that all of

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the variables (as shown in Table 3) have individual reliability values that are significantly higher than the minimum allowed level of 0.7. From table 3, the indicator reliability results showed the following: Employee behaviour (CA= 0.939) and Job Stress (CA= 0.931).

Higher values, such as those presented in table 3 above, indicate better internal consistency. These clearly indicated that the study's indicators were reliable for the model since their thresholds were acceptable (>0.70). Composite Reliability (CR), which is a measure of the reliability of a latent variable or construct in a structural equation model was also determined. It considers both the internal consistency of the items and the factor loadings. According to Henseler et al. (2012) composite reliability is considered a preferred alternative to Cronbach's Alpha to test for reliability in reflective model because Conabach's Alpha may either over-estaimate or under-estimate scale reliability. A value close to 1 indicates high reliability. Table 3 provides an overview of the study's composite reliability findings. These are the facts: employee behaviour (CR=0.948) and job stress (CR=0.941). This affirms the strong mutual associations between the assigned indicators and their respective constructs.

Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) identified rho_A as the most essential PLS reliability measure, as it is currently the sole consistent measure of PLS construct scores. The reliability measure, rho¬_A, estimates the squared correlation between the PLS construct score and the unknown actual construct score. The minimum score is 0.7 (Afum et al., 2019; Henseler, 2017). Based on the findings, all constructions had a rho_As greater than 0.7.

That is: employee behaviour (rho_A=0.947), job stress (rho_A=0.947).

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Convergent validity was assessed using the Average Variance Extracted [AVE]. Convergent validity assesses the extent of correlation between Multiple indicators of the same construct that agree (Ab Hamid et al., 2017).

A higher AVE suggests better convergent validity, indicating that a larger proportion of the variance is captured by the construct itself rather than measurement error. Hair et al. (2011) proposed that a construct should exhibit a minimum Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.5 to demonstrate convergent validity Ringle et al. (2015). A detailed study of the AVEs for the constructs indicates that they precisely measured the convergent validity. The findings indicated that the AVEs for the variables were employee behaviour (AVE=0.647), job stress (AVE=0.640), surpassing the 0.5 threshold.

Discriminant Validity

The study further tested for discriminant validity as suggested by Hair et al., (2014). Discriminant validity is a crucial aspect of measurement validation, ensuring that a particular measurement tool is distinct from others and truly captures the unique characteristics of the intended construct (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2016). It is commonly assessed through methods like confirmatory factor analysis, where researchers examine factor loadings and compare model fit indices to establish that measures are not highly correlated with each other (Hair et al., 2017; Kline, 2016). For instance, Hair et al., (2019) emphasizes how researchers should rigorously test the distinctiveness of constructs to ensure the robustness of their findings.

Fornell and Larcher (1981) introduced a criterion for determining the existence of discriminant validity. They introduced a square root of the

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average variance extracted (AVE) criterion for determining the discriminant validity of constructs in structural equation modeling (SEM) or factor analysis. The criterion is commonly known as the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The results are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

	Employee Behaviour	Job stress
Employee Behaviour	0.804	
Job Stress	0.304	0.800

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

Table 4 shows that all factorial loadings inside their respective latent variables (constructs) are higher than the correlation values among the latent variables. That is, the values for the Fornell-Lacker criteria were: employee behaviour (0. 804), job stress (0.800). This finding implies that each construct is distinct from the others, ensuring uniqueness in measurement.

Outer loadings

To further assess discriminant validity, the cross loadings of the indicators were examined, as recommended by Hair et al. (2012), which states that measurement indicators on their assigned constructs should be significantly greater than their loadings on other constructs. Table 5 shows the cross loadings of indicators, with outer loadings on each construct exceeding 0.70. Also, the construct/variable has a higher load (each item loads highest on its related construct) than other research variables in the same row and columns (Hair et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2018). This demonstrates that the model has an acceptable level of discriminant validity. Specifically, each indication has a higher cross loading on its respective latent variable than on other constructs.

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In accordance with these findings, the study indicates that the model's latent variables do indeed exhibit discriminant validity. Table 5 shows the cross loadings of the indicators.

Table 5: Cross Loading of Variables

	Loadings	P-values
EMB1	0.774	0.000
EMB10	0.812	0.000
EMB2	0.745	0.000
EMB3	0.742	0.000
EMB4	0.757	0.000
EMB5	0.799	0.000
EMB6	0.833	0.000
EMB7	0.872	0.000
EMB8	0.867	0.000
EMB9	0.830	0.000
JBS1	0.805	0.000
JBS2	0.755	0.000
JBS3	0.805	0.000
JBS4	0.796	0.000
JBS5	0.877	0.000
JBS6	0.834	0.000
JBS7	0.777	0.000
JBS8	0.765	0.000
JBS9	0.777	0.000

Source: Field survey, Annie, (2023)

Results shows that almost all indicators had loadings greater than 0.7, indicating strong measurement of the constructs, as evidenced by their respective p-values. The outer loadings were all statistically significant because they had $p < 0.05$.

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Table 6: Specific Direct Effects of Variables

Structural Relationship	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Std. Dev (STDEV)	T Stat.	P values
Job stress -> Employee behaviour	-0.025	0.000	0.098	0.26	0.795

Source: Field survey, Annie, (2023)

The findings in Table 6 above revealed that job stress had a weak and non-significant direct impact on employee behaviour. The coefficient for job stress influencing employee behaviour was -0.025, with a P-value of 0.795 as shown in Table 8. This result suggests a very weak, non-significant negative relationship between job stress and employee behaviour, implying that job stress alone may not have a strong direct influence on either proactive or counterproductive behaviours of employees which is in line with the study by Attaullah and Afsar, (2021).

This could be interpreted to mean that other factors, possibly like individual resilience, job type, workload, time pressure and emotional demands of the work might alleviate or aggravate the effects of job stress on behaviour as opined by Coetzee and De Villiers (2010). According to Marais-Opperman (2020), individuals perceive and react to stress differently based on their personal coping resources and perceived stressors. The weak relationship found in the study implies that job stress, as a general construct, might not directly predict specific types of employee behaviours without considering individual differences in perception and coping mechanisms (Warraich et al., 2014).

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Moreover, Bakker and Demerouti's (2007) research on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model emphasizes that job stress outcomes depend significantly on the balance between job demands and available resources, potentially explaining why job stress alone a strong predictor of employee behavior isn't, as found in this study (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In terms of the JD-R model, job stress can be conceptualized as a job demand (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). It encompasses the aspects of a job that strain the employee, potentially leading to exhaustion or health problems if not managed effectively. The weak relationship between job stress and employee behaviour as discovered in the study suggests that job stress alone, as a demand, does not directly translate into negative employee behaviours such as decreased productivity or increased counterproductive work behaviours unless it exceeds the individual's coping resources as opined by Demerouti & Bakker, 2011.

According to the JD-R model, the impact of job demands (such as stress) on employee outcomes (such as behaviour) can be buffered by job resources. These resources might include social support, autonomy, or opportunities for professional development (Tremblay & Messervey, 2011). There is a relatively small relationship between job stress and employee behavior which suggests that compensatory job resources can mitigate the detrimental impacts of job stress, as proposed by Tremblay and Messervey, (2011). This is consistent with the findings of Bakker and Demerouti (2007), who state that resources can mitigate the impact of demands on burnout and increase engagement by encouraging motivation through the fulfilment of basic needs.

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In conclusion, within the context of the JD-R model, the study's result that job stress has a slight direct impact on employee behavior highlights the possible moderating role of job resources (social support).

This perspective suggests that efforts to enhance workplace conditions at the College of Distance Education by boosting resources could be particularly effective at minimizing the adverse effects of job stress on employee behaviour, as suggested by Asamoah-Appiah and Aggrey-Fynn (2017). This approach not only aligns with the JD-R model but also with broader occupational health psychology research that emphasizes the balancing role of resources in stress outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Objective 2: What is the relationship between social support and employee behavior in the workplace?

The second research question examined the association between social support and employee behaviour among College of Distance Education staff. The inquiry was designed to see if there is a causal relationship between social support and employee behaviour. The measuring model includes a reliability and validity assessment for the scales and data. The reflective outer model is evaluated by examining the reliability of the individual items [indicator reliability], the reliability of each latent variable otherwise internal consistency [Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, rho_A], construct validity-convergent validity [Average Variance Extracted], and discriminant validity [Fornell-Lacker criteria] (Schuberth et al., 2018; Garson, 2016). The findings are provided as follows.

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Table 7: Construct Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Social Support	0.942	0.949	0.607	0.942
Employee Behaviour	0.939	0.947	0.948	0.647

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

The item's reliability was analysed using the composite reliability (CR) formula. According to researchers (Hair et al., 2013; Nunnally, 1978), all of the variables in Table 7 had reliability measures above acceptable reasonable standards (Average Variance Extracted > 0.50, composite reliability > 0.70). First and foremost, indicator reliability (Cronbach alpha, CA) is a measure of internal consistency. It determines how effectively the pieces in a construct or scale correlate with one another. It is clear that all of the variables (as illustrated in Table 7) have individual reliability values that are significantly higher than the permissible minimum of 0.7. Table 7 displays the indication reliability findings as follows: Employee behavior (CA= 0.939), and social support (CA= 0.942).

Higher values, as shown in table 3 above, indicate stronger internal consistency. These results clearly demonstrated that the study's indicators were reliable for the model because their thresholds were satisfactory (>0.70). The Composite Reliability (CR), a measure of the reliability of a latent variable or construct in a structural equation model, was derived as well. It evaluates both the items' internal consistency and factor loadings. According to Henseler et al. (2012), composite reliability is preferred over Cronbach's Alpha when testing for reliability in a reflective model since Cronbach’s Alpha may overestimate or underestimate scale dependability.

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A value close to 1 indicates high reliability. Table 7 provides an overview of the study's composite reliability findings. These are the facts: employee behaviour (CR=0.948) and social support (CR=0.607). This affirms the strong mutual associations between the assigned indicators and their respective constructs.

Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) identify rho_A as the most essential PLS reliability measure, as it is currently the sole consistent measure of PLS construct scores. The reliability measure rho¬_A estimates the squared correlation between the PLS construct score and an unknown genuine construct score. It must have a minimum 0.7 score (Afum et al., 2019; Henseler, 2017). Based on the data, all constructions had rho_As values greater than 0.7. That is, employee behaviour (rho_A=0.947) and societal support (rho_A=0.949). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to assess convergent validity. Convergent valaidity assesses the level of agreement among multiple indicators of the same construct (Ab Hamid et al., 2017).

A higher AVE indicates better convergent validity, implying that the construct itself captures a greater proportion of the variance than measurement error. Hair et al. (2011) proposed that a construct have a minimum Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.5 for demonstrating convergent validity (Ringle et al., 2015). A thorough look at the AVEs for the constructs demonstrates that they accurately calculated the convergent validity. The data revealed that the AVEs for the variables were employee behavior (AVE=0.647) and job stress (AVE=0.942), which exceeded the 0.5 threshold.

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Discriminant Validity

The study also looked at discriminant validity, as advised by Hair et al. (2014). Discriminant validity is a crucial aspect of measurement validation, ensuring that a particular measurement tool is distinct from others and truly captures the unique characteristics of the intended construct (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2016). It is commonly assessed through methods like confirmatory factor analysis, where researchers examine factor loadings and compare model fit indices to establish that measures are not highly correlated with each other (Hair et al., 2017; Kline, 2016). For instance, Hair et al., (2019) emphasizes how researchers should rigorously test the distinctiveness of constructs to ensure the robustness of their findings.

Fornell and Larcher (1981) introduced a criterion for determining the presence of discriminant validity. They introduced a square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) criterion for determining the discriminant validity of constructs in structural equation modeling (SEM) or component analysis. The criterion is commonly known as the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Discriminant Validity

	Employee Behaviour	Social support
Employee Behaviour	0.804	
Social support	0.379	0.779

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

Table 8 shows that all factorial loadings within their respective latent variables (constructs) are higher than the correlation values among the latent variables, implying that each construct is distinct from the others, ensuring

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measurement uniqueness. The values for the Fornell-Lacker criteria were employee behaviour (0. 804) and social support (0.779).

Outer loading

To further assess discriminant validity, the cross loadings of the indicators were examined, as recommended by Hair et al. (2012), which states that measurement indicators on their assigned constructs should be significantly greater than their loadings on other constructs. Table 9 shows the cross loadings of indicators, with outer loadings on each construct greater than 0.70. Furthermore, the construct/variable has a larger load (each item loads the most on its related construct) than other research variables in the same row and columns (Hair et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2018). This demonstrates that the model has an acceptable level of discriminant validity. Specifically, each indication has a higher cross loading on its particular latent variable than on other constructs. In accordance with these findings, the study indicates that the model's latent variables do indeed exhibit discriminant validity. Table 9 shows the cross loadings of the indicators.

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Table 9: Cross Loading of Variables

	Loadings	P-values
EMB1	0.774	0.000
EMB10	0.812	0.000
EMB2	0.745	0.000
EMB3	0.742	0.000
EMB4	0.757	0.000
EMB5	0.799	0.000
EMB6	0.833	0.000
EMB7	0.872	0.000
EMB8	0.867	0.000
EMB9	0.830	0.000
SOS1	0.784	0.000
SOS10	0.762	0.000
SOS12	0.767	0.000
SOS13	0.785	0.000
SOS14	0.744	0.000
SOS15	0.794	0.000
SOS3	0.762	0.000
SOS5	0.851	0.000
SOS6	0.784	0.000
SOS7	0.803	0.000
SOS8	0.757	0.000
SOS9	0.747	0.000

Source: Field survey, Annie, (2023)

The factor loading results indicate that almost all of the indicators had loading greater than 0.7, showing that they significantly measured the constructs they claimed to measure, as seen by their corresponding p-values. The p-values indicate the level of significance of the indicators' ability to reliably measure the corresponding construct. The outside loadings were statistically significant ($p<0.05$).

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Table 10: Specific Direct Effects of Variables

Structural Relationship	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Std. Dev (STDEV)	T Stat.	P values
Social Support -> Employee behaviour	0.441	0.434	0.101	4.376	0.000

Source: Field survey, Annie, (2023)

Table 10 shows that the path coefficient for social support influencing employee behaviour was 0.441, with a statistically significant P-value of 0.000. This demonstrates a strong, positive relationship between social support and employee behaviour. The results imply that high levels of social support at the workplace will lead to positive and proactive employee behaviours as opined by Caesens et al. (2020). The findings also affirm the assertion of Sakurai and Jex (2012) that social support at the workplace can enhance performance, increase job satisfaction, and reduce counterproductive work behaviours. This underscores the importance of social support as a beneficial resource in the workplace (Tremblay & Messervey, 2011).

Hamid and Amin (2014); Tremblay and (Messervey 2011) also confirmed a similar conclusion that social support is widely acknowledged in the literature as a vital buffer against the negative effects of job stress and a promoter of positive organizational behaviour. Studies by Jolly et al. (2021), for instance, describe how social support not only reduces the psychological and physiological effects of stress but also enhances employee engagement and satisfaction. The significant impact found in this study corroborates findings from the broader research, which consistently shows that social

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support in the workplace leads to better mental health outcomes and proactive work behaviours (Halbesleben, 2006). Furthermore, the results are also consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs and its direct link with social support. Maslow's hierarchy of needs offers a valuable framework that analyse how social support influences employee behaviour by fulfilling different hierarchical needs, from the basic need to a more advanced need (Cherry, 2021).

Social support in the workplace plays a crucial role in fulfilling multiple levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, significantly influencing employee behaviour and workplace dynamics. It meets the third level of Maslow's needs by fostering emotional relationships that enhance cooperation, morale, and proactive behaviour, contributing to a positive and harmonious work environment (Hotchkiss & Lesher, 2018). Social support also addresses safety and security needs by promoting a conducive and safe working environment, buffering against the stress and uncertainties of the job, which in turn boosts performance and engagement as opined by Viera et al. (2021). At the fourth level, it enhances self-esteem through recognition and encouragement, improving productivity and behaviour (Yousaf et al., 2020).

More so, social support addresses self-actualization needs by creating an environment that encourages personal growth, innovation, and the tackling of new challenges (Shuang et al., 202). Overall, the strong positive correlation between social support and employee behaviour underscores its importance in satisfying essential human needs and enhancing overall workplace effectiveness (Tremblay & Messervey, 2011).

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This result suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing workplace social support could beneficially impact multiple levels of employees' needs according to Maslow's hierarchy, thereby promoting healthier and more productive behaviour. Organizations might focus on cultivating a supportive culture through team-building activities, peer mentoring programs, and management training that emphasizes empathetic leadership and open communication.

In conclusion the robust relationship between social support and positive employee behaviour, viewed through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, underscores the vital role of social relationships in fulfilling employees needs within the workplace. This multifaceted approach to employee well-being can lead to more engaged, satisfied, and productive employees. Management of the College of Distance Education can enhance employee behaviour and well-being by fostering an environment that addresses multiple levels of human needs, providing social support and incorporating the principles of Maslow's hierarchy into organizational policies and practices.

Objective 3: How does social support moderate the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour?

The third research question sought to determine the moderating role of social support on the relationship between job stress and employee behavior among staff of College of Distance Education. The measuring model consists of a reliability and validity assessment for the scales and data. The reflective outer model is evaluated by examining the reliability of individual items [indicator reliability], reliability of each latent variable otherwise

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internal consistency [Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, rho_A], construct validity-convergent validity [Average Variance Extracted], and discriminant validity [Fornell-Lacker criteria] (Ringle et al., 2015; Garson, 2016). The findings are provided as follows.

Table 11: Construct Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Social Support	0.942	0.949	0.607	0.942
Job Stress	0.931	0.949	0.941	0.640

Source: Field survey, Annie, (2023)

The reliability item was analysed using the composite reliability (CR) formula. According to researchers (Hair et al., 2013; Nunnally, 1978), all of the variables in Table 11 had reliability measures above acceptable reasonable standards (Average Variance Extracted > 0.50, composite reliability > 0.70). At its core, indicator dependability (Cronbach alpha, CA) is a measure of internal consistency. It determines how effectively the pieces in a construct or scale correlate with one another. As can be seen in Table 11, all of the variables have individual reliability values that are significantly higher than the minimum allowed level of 0.7. The indicator reliability results in table 11 were as follows: job stress (CA= 0.931) and social support (CA= 0.942).

Higher values, such as those shown in Table 11, suggest improved internal consistency. These results clearly demonstrated that the study's indicators were dependable for the model because their thresholds were satisfactory (>0.70). The Composite Reliability (CR), a measure of the reliability of a latent variable or construct in a structural equation model, was also calculated. It evaluates both the items' internal consistency and factor loadings. According

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to Henseler et al. (2012), composite reliability is chosen over Cronbach's Alpha when testing for reliability in a reflective model since Cronbach's Alpha may overestimate or underestimate scale dependability. A rating close to one implies great reliability. Table 11 provides an overview of the study's composite reliability findings. These are the facts: job stress (CR=0.941) and social support (CR=0.607). This affirms the strong mutual associations between the assigned indicators and their respective constructs.

findings of Dijkstra and Henseler (2015) indicates, the rho_A is the most significant PLS reliability measure because it is the only consistent reliability measure of PLS construct scores currently available. The reliability measure rho¬_A estimates the squared correlation between the PLS construct score and an unknown genuine construct score. It must have a minimum 0.7 score (Afum et al., 2019; Henseler, 2017). a review of the data, all constructions had rho_As values greater than 0.7. That is: occupational stress (rho_A=0.949) and social support (rho_A=0.949). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to assess convergent validity. Convergent valaidity assesses the level of agreement among multiple indicators of the same construct (Ab Hamid et al., 2017).

A higher AVE indicates better convergent validity, implying that the construct itself captures a greater proportion of the variance than measurement error. Hair et al. (2011) proposed that a construct have a minimum Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of 0.5 to show convergent validity (Ringle et al., 2015). A thorough look at the AVEs for the constructs demonstrates that they accurately calculated the convergent validity. The results showed that the

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AVEs for the variables were social support (AVE=0.647) and job stress (AVE=0.942), which exceeded the 0.5 threshold.

Discriminant Validity

The study also examined for discriminant validity as suggested by Hair et al., (2014). Discriminant validity is a crucial aspect of measurement validation, ensuring that a particular measurement tool is distinct from others and truly captures the unique characteristics of the intended construct (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2016). It is commonly assessed through methods like confirmatory factor analysis, where researchers examine factor loadings and compare model fit indices to establish that measures are not highly correlated with each other (Hair et al., 2017; Kline, 2016). For instance, Hair et al., (2019) emphasizes how researchers should rigorously test the distinctiveness of constructs to ensure the robustness of their findings.

The result was presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Discriminant Validity

	Job stress	Social support
Job Stress	0.800	
Social support	0.940	0.779

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

Table 12 shows that all factorial loadings inside their respective latent variables (constructs) are greater than the correlation values between the latent variables. This illustrates that, the values for the Fornell-Lacker criteria were occupational stress (0.800) and social support (0.779). This discovery implies that each construct is separate from the others, ensuring measurement accuracy.

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Outer loadings

To further assess discriminant validity, the cross loadings of the indicators were examined, as recommended by Hair et al. (2012), which states that measurement indicators on their assigned constructs should be significantly greater than their loadings on other constructs. Table 13 shows the cross loadings of indicators, with outer loadings for each construct greater than 0.70. Furthermore, the construct/variable has a larger load (each item loads the most on its related construct) than other research variables in the same row and columns (Hair et al., 2010; Khan et al., 2018). This demonstrates that the model has an acceptable level of discriminant validity. Specifically, each indication has a higher cross loading on its particular latent variable than on other constructs. In accordance with these findings, the study indicates that the model's latent variables do indeed exhibit discriminant validity. Table 13 shows the cross loadings of the indicators.

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Table 13: Cross Loading of Variables

	Loadings	P-values
JBS1	0.805	0.000
JBS2	0.755	0.000
JBS3	0.805	0.000
JBS4	0.796	0.000
JBS5	0.877	0.000
JBS6	0.834	0.000
JBS7	0.777	0.000
JBS8	0.765	0.000
JBS9	0.777	0.000
SOS1	0.784	0.000
SOS10	0.762	0.000
SOS12	0.767	0.000
SOS13	0.785	0.000
SOS14	0.744	0.000
SOS15	0.794	0.000
SOS3	0.762	0.000
SOS5	0.851	0.000
SOS6	0.784	0.000
SOS7	0.803	0.000
SOS8	0.757	0.000
SOS9	0.747	0.000

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

The factor loading results demonstrate that almost all of the indicators had loadings more than 0.7, indicating that they significantly measured the constructs they claimed to measure, as seen by their corresponding p-values. The p-values indicate the number of significant predictions of the indicators for accurately assessing the respective constructs. The outside loadings were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 14: Specific Direct Effects of Variables

Structural Relationship	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Std. Dev (STDEV)	T Stat.	P values
Social Support x Job stress -> Employee behaviour	0.14	0.131	0.064	2.174	0.030

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

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The results in Table 14 showed that the moderating effect of social support on the association between job stress and employee behavior had a path coefficient of 0.14 and a P-value of 0.030. This significant positive coefficient indicates that social support does moderate the association between job stress and employee behaviour. Essentially, as social support grows, the detrimental impact of job stress on employee behavior reduces, resulting in more positive or less negative behaviours (Cohen and McKay, 2020).

This interaction highlights the protective role of social support against the negative consequences of job-related stress, as discovered by Jolly et al. (2021).

This outcome is also compatible with the buffering hypothesis, which states that social support reduces the negative impacts of job stress on health and well-being. (Cohen and McKay, 2020; Szkody et al., 2021). A study by Szkody and McKinney (2020), also supports this hypothesis by demonstrating that social support moderates stress outcomes across various occupational settings. The study's findings add to this body of evidence, suggesting that interventions aimed at enhancing social support can be particularly effective in environments characterized by high stress.

On the premise of this study, the effect social support was grouped into three types; Emotional, informational, and instructional support.

The contributing effect of the individual types to the total moderating effect of social support is provided in Table 15 below.

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Table 15: Specific Indirect Effect of Variable

Structural Relationship	Original sample (O)	Sample mean	Std. Dev. (STDEV)	T statistics	P values
Emotional support -> Social Support -> Employee behaviour	0.073	0.071	0.027	2.696	0.007
Informational support -> Social Support -> Employee behaviour	0.512	0.505	0.119	4.288	0
Instructional support -> Social Support -> Employee behaviour	-0.047	-0.046	0.026	1.767	0.077

Source: Field Survey, Annie, (2023)

From Table 15, the positive path coefficient with a statistically significant P-value (O=0.073, T= 2.696, P= 0.007) from the study, emotional support indirectly increases positive employee behaviour through its impact on overall social support (Wang et al., 2020). Again, result also shows that there is a strong positive indirect effect of informational support on employee behaviour via social support, with a very significant statistical outcome (O=0.512, T= 0.512, P= 0.00). Informational support typically includes providing advice, guidance, or necessary information that can help employees navigate job challenges or stress (Wright, Marsh, & Wibberley, 2022).

The high coefficient suggests that this form of social support is particularly effective in enhancing social support mechanisms that lead to improved employee behaviours. It indicates that enhancing informational support can be a key strategy for organizations aiming to boost employee morale and performance (Charvat et al., 2021).

In addition, the result for instrumental support (O= -0.047, T= 1.767, P= 0.077), show that instrumental support showed a relatively statistically

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insignificant effect on employee behaviour. This suggests that instrumental support might slightly reduce positive employee behaviour through its effect on social support Taylor and Frechette (2022), but this effect is not statistically significant. Instrumental support involves providing the necessary tools or assistance to complete tasks (Kundi, Khoso & Adnan, 2022). The non-significant and negative direction of the effect suggest that the way instrumental support is being administered might not be as effective, or it could be that the support provided is not meeting the actual needs of the employees as opined by Taylor and Frechette (2022).

Research Question Four: What is the implication of these findings for organizations in terms of promoting employee well-being and performance?

The fourth research question sought to examine the implication of the Findings for organizations (College of Distance Education). The findings of this study have several important implications for organizational practices. Given the strong positive impact of social support on employee behaviour, organizations should focus on building a supportive work environment (Moore, & Lucas, 2021). This can be through mentorship programs, team-building activities, supportive supervision, and resources for employee assistance (Cohen, & McKay, 2020). Organizations also need to consider the importance of providing emotional support. It is crucial to ensure that this support is perceived positively and is genuinely helpful, rather than potentially being seen as patronizing or insufficient (Wang et al., 2020). Also, given its strong positive impact, focusing on increasing informational support can be particularly beneficial.

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This could involve more comprehensive training sessions, better access to information resources, or more supportive communication from management (Charvat et al., 2021). The findings also suggest a need to reassess how instrumental support is offered. It may be necessary to align the support more closely with the employees' actual needs or to ensure that the support is empowering rather than overwhelming (Taylor & Frechette, 2022). Social support is valuable for sustaining employee performance and health. Organizations can leverage this by fostering a supportive culture through policies that promote work-life balance, provide support resources like counselling and mentorship, and encourage supportive supervisory behaviours (Cherry, 2021; Jolly et al., 2021; Halbesleben, 2006).

Although job stress alone did not significantly affect behaviour, its interaction with social support suggests that reducing job stress should still be a priority. Stress management programs, realistic job previewing, and job redesign can help manage the levels of stress employees face thereby promoting a healthier work environment (Warraich et al., 2014). The results advocate for comprehensive well-being programs that not only aim to reduce stress but also enhance social support among employees, thus fostering a resilient workforce.

In summary, these findings offer valuable insights into how job stress and social support independently and jointly influence employee behaviour. For organizations, prioritizing the cultivation of a supportive environment not only helps in mitigating stress but also enhances overall employee behaviour, which is crucial for long-term organizational success and employee well-being. Combining these insights, organizations should aim to develop holistic

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support strategies that effectively integrate emotional, informational, and instrumental support to foster a supportive work environment that can effectively counteract the stressors encountered by employees.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study and corresponding discussions. From the results presented above, the demographic characteristics suggested that staffs of the College of Distance Education are largely young and fairly educated, with a significant portion in senior roles. The results also showed a very weak, non-significant negative relationship between job stress and employee behaviour, implying that job stress alone may not have a strong direct influence on either proactive or counterproductive behaviours of employees. It was also discovered that there is a strong, positive relationship between social support and employee behaviour. It was also revealed that social support does mitigate the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the study's essential findings, conclusions, and recommendations. In addition, based on the study's limitations and conclusions, some recommendations for future research have been made. The recommendations emphasize the importance of social support in regulating negative employee behaviour in organizations.

Summary

This study looked into the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour, as well as the effect of social support in moderating it. Four objectives were developed to guide the study: (a) examine the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour amongst staff at CoDE: (b) assess the relationship between social support and employee behaviour amongst staff at CoDE: (c) investigate the impact of social support on employee stress levels amongst staff at CoDE: (d) examine the moderating role of social support on job stress and employee behaviour amongst staff at CoDE. The study's literature review was divided into three sections: theoretical review, empirical review, and conceptual review, which includes a graphical representation of the study's concepts and construct. To meet the study's objectives, a descriptive research approach was used to gather and analyse quantitative data.

The study's population consisted of 150 employees drawn from the whole staff of the College of Distance Education at the University of Cape

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Coast. They study however employed a census method of sampling to sample respondents.

In addition, a structured questionnaire was used as the major gathering tool from respondents. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to assess respondents' demographic data as well as generate data for the study. For the symmetrical approach, the processed data was analysed using the Partial Least Squares-Structure Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM 3) method, where descriptive statistics, measurements, and structural models were assessed to achieve the study's goal.

The key findings of the study were as follows:

1. The survey results indicate a weak, non-significant negative link between job stress and employee behaviour. This suggests that job stress may not have a direct impact on employees' proactive or counterproductive behaviours.
2. Other factors, possibly like individual resilience, job type, workload, time pressure and emotional demands of the work might mitigate or exacerbate the effects of job stress on behaviour.
3. The survey results from the second research question showed a substantial positive correlation between social support and employee behaviour. The findings suggest that high levels of social support in the workplace will result in good and proactive employee behaviours.
4. The findings indicate a need to reassess how instrumental support is offered. It may be necessary to connect the support more closely with the employees' actual requirements or to ensure that the support is empowering rather than overpowering.

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Conclusion

The primary objective of the research was to analyse the impact of job stress on employee behaviour by assessing the moderating role of workplace social support on employees at the College of Distance Education (UCC). The study found a very week, non-significant negative relationship between job stress and employee behaviour. It implies that job stress may not have an extensive direct influence on employees' proactive or counterproductive behaviours. The weak association also shows that job stress, as a general construct, may not directly predict specific types of employee behaviours without considering individual differences in perception and coping methods.

The study also found a high, positive correlation between social support and employee behaviour. Results suggest that high levels of social support at work will lead to good and proactive employee behaviours such as improved performance, increased job satisfaction, and a reduction in counterproductive workplace behaviours.

According to Caesens et al. (2020), social support is a valuable resource in the workplace. The moderating effects of social support on employee behaviour were likewise shown to be favourable and significant. This strong beneficial effect indicates that social support does actually moderate the relationship between job stress and employee behaviour.

That is, as social support grows, the detrimental influence of job stress on employee behaviour diminishes, resulting in more positive or less negative behaviours. Furthermore, the investigation found a favourable indirect effect of emotional and informational social support on employee behaviour. However, instrumental support had a relatively insignificant effect on

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employee behaviour, implying that instrumental support may decrease positive employee behaviour through its effect on social support.

The non-significant and negative direction of the effect suggests that the manner in which instrumental support is delivered may be ineffective or does not satisfy the actual demands of the employees.

The study's findings have several key implications for organizational practices, including the need for firms to prioritize creating a supportive work environment through mentorship programs, team-building activities, supportive supervision, and resources for employee assistance. Results also advocate for complete well-being initiatives that not only lower stress but also improve employee social support, resulting in a more resilient workforce.

Organizations should aim to develop holistic support strategies that effectively integrate emotional, informational, and instrumental support to foster a supportive work environment that can effectively counteract the stressors encountered by employees.

Recommendations of the study

1. Management of the CoDE should increase efforts to enhance workplace conditions by boosting job resources like emotional and informational support, autonomy and opportunities for professional development, as this can be particularly effective in mitigating the adverse effects of job stress on employee behaviour.
2. The management of CoDE ought to concentrate on creating a positive work atmosphere. This can be accomplished through employee assistance services, team-building activities, mentorship programs, and supportive supervision.

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3. In order to develop a resilient workforce, staff of CoDE should push for comprehensive well-being programs that not only seeks to reduce stress levels but also to improve social support among co-workers.
4. Although job stress alone does not significantly affect behaviour, management of CoDE should implement Stress management programs, realistic job previews, and job redesign to manage employee stress levels.

Suggestion for Future Research

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations for future research were made:

1. Future research could involve longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of job stress and social support on employee behaviour. This would help to understand how these relationships evolve over time and the lasting impact of social support interventions.
2. To add to, conducting similar studies in different organizational settings and across various industries would provide a broader understanding of the dynamics between job stress, social support, and employee behaviour. This would also help in generalizing the findings to a wider population.
3. Again, further research can examine the role of technology in providing social support. Investigate how digital tools and platforms (e.g., online communities, mobile apps) can be used to offer emotional, informational, and instrumental support to employees

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAFF

Introduction

This survey is intended to gather data on job stress, employee behaviour, and social support among staff of the College of Distance Education, at the University of Cape Coast. By this survey questionnaire form, you are kindly requested to express your opinions on the subjects being investigated. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and your comments are strictly academic.

I appreciate your time and effort.

SECTION A: Background Characteristics of Respondent

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age: 20-25 [ ] 26-35 [ ] 36-45 [ ] 46-55 [ ] Above 55 [ ]

3. **Number of years you have worked**

1 year and below [ ] 2-5 years [ ] 6-9 years [ ] Above 9 years [ ]

4**. Educational level:**

Junior High School [ ] Senior High School [ ] Diploma/Technical [ ]

University Degrees [ ] Others [ ]

5. **Marital status:**

Single [ ] Married [ ] Separated [ ] Widow [ ]

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6. Job Category:

Junior Staff [ ] Senior Staff [ ] Senior Members [ ]

SECTION B: JOB STRESS

INSTRUCTION: Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the items below. The columns are on a scale of 1–7, with **1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Somewhat Disagree, 4=Unsure, 5= somewhat agree, 6=Agree, and 7=Strongly Agree**.

	Job Stress	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	It is very easy for me to balance the demands of my work and my personal/family life.							
2	I feel overwhelmed by the demands of my job.							
3	I frequently experience physical symptoms of stress at the workplace							
4	I find my job to be very stressful							
5	I am unable to speak openly about my problems at work							
6	I get enough time to relax and rest outside of work							
7	I find the given targets achievable							
8	My weekly productivity is always influenced by my weekend travel.							
9	Stress always affects my relationship with co-workers.							

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SECTION C: EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOUR

Please indicate the extent to which these policies are been utilised. The columns are on a scale of 1–7, with **1=Never, 2=Almost never, 3=rarely, 4=sometimes, 5=Often, 6=Very often, 7=Always.**

	Employee Behaviour	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	I am punctual at work.							
2	I am proactive in identifying and solving work problems.							
3	I am respectful to my management and co-workers.							
4	I am open to feedback and constructive criticism.							
5	I am willing to go extra mile to help my co-workers							
6	I am a team player							
7	My job provides a sense of community and belonging.							
8	Do you feel that your job provides opportunity for growth and advancement							
9	Do you feel that your job allows for a good work-life balance							
10	My job provides a sense of autonomy and independence.							

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SECTION D: SOCIAL SUPPORT

Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. The columns are on a scale of 1 – 7, with **1=Never, 2=Almost never, 3=rarely, 4=sometimes, 5=Often, 6=Very often, 7=Always.**

	Emotional Support	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	I have colleagues with whom I share my joys and sorrows							
2	My co-workers offer me words of encouragement.							
3	My supervisors provide me with a shoulder to cry on.							
4	My co-workers really try to help me in these challenging times.							
5	I feel valued and appreciated							
6	My co-workers are respectful of my boundaries							
	Informational Support							
1	My colleagues are knowledgeable about the institution's policies and procedures.							
2	My co-workers provide me with information about job-related topics.							
3	My supervisors provide feedback on my work performance							
4	My colleagues give good advice when I need it							
5	My co-workers are knowledgeable about the job.							
	Instrumental Support							
1	My co-workers and supervisors help me with my workload when I am overwhelmed.							
2	My supervisors provide me with the necessary resource to complete my task.							
3	My co-workers cover me when I am absent or I need a time off.							
4	I can count on my colleagues when things go wrong							

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